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# ***BET EMET MINISTRIES***

*"Hebrew for "House of Truth"*



## **MARCION AND THE "FIRST" NEW TESTAMENT...WHO WERE THE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANS AND WHAT DID THEY BELIEVE ABOUT "THE CHRIST"?**

*A Christian's religious belief system, when tested and exposed to contradictory facts from Biblical languages, Biblical history, Biblical culture, and archeology, must in the Spirit of Truth and Repentance, be flexible enough to change*

**Answer for yourself:** Can you agree with the above statement? If you can then this website is for you; if not then don't waste your time.

*I have endeavored to make this website the most complete, honest, and best documented site upon Marcion and New Testament studies. I present this work hoping that the facts presented will be more highly esteemed than common dogma and tradition. This website goes straight for the truth-written so one doesn't have to accept church teachings blindly, but can read FACTS, and decide for oneself.*

*This is my gift to the sincere seeker of truth. Craig Lyons M.Div.*

## **THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT....DID YOU KNOW THAT IS WAS ORIGINALLY A TREATISE ON GNOSTICISM AND TAUGHT A NON-HUMAN CHRIST?**

**Hard to believe? Well I will prove it to you as well as the later Roman corruption of the "First New Testament" whereby an "allegorical understanding of the 'the Christ' as held by the earliest Christians is later "literalized" by Romanism into a "human Christ" as we are taught today.** This is a complex study requiring knowledge in many areas and I will do my best to put the pieces of this theological puzzle together for you throughout this website. I will ask you be patient and it will all come together when we finish this study. That is a promise. Craig Lyons M.Div.

## **THE STAKES ARE HIGH THAT WE UNDERSTAND "THE CHRIST" CORRECTLY AS WELL AS THE JEWISH MESSIAH**

Today in the Western Hemisphere if you are a Christian then you most likely think that you have the truth concerning the Jewish Messiah let alone "the Christ" since being reared most likely in either Catholicism or one of the many sects of Protestantism. If you are diligent to continue to study through this website then you will be challenged to your very core with what you will come to see and know that will change your understanding of the earliest Christians and what they believed about "the Christ" and the "Jewish Messiah."**In other words what we as Catholic or Protestant believers today have been taught to believe about Jesus and "the Christ" as filtered through the Roman Church in its earliest centuries is quite different from the earliest Christian beliefs concerning "the Christ" as well as Jesus!** Let me say that there is a reason why Judaism does not accept the Christian's Christ and its understanding of the Jewish Messiah. The reason is simple: We as Christians are wrong. The reason again is a corrupt New Testament given to us down through history by Rome which totally destroys the earliest understanding of "the Christ" and the Jewish Messiah by the "earliest Christians."

That most likely is shock to you; especially when such studies provides the evidence that will prove to you that the earliest believers "in Jesus" had often a completely different understanding of "the Christ" and "Jesus" as has been taught to us today by our New Testaments as filtered through the Holy Roman forgery mill.

**Answer for yourself:** How could this have happened? What did the "earliest Christians" actually believe about "the Christ"? Well it all began with a man named "Marcion" who was a Gnostic.

## **I NEVER HEARD OF GNOSTICISM**

**It is a undeniable fact that the First New Testament writings were gathered by a man representing a very large group of believers who are today termed "Gnostics" and who were not part of what would later be Western Christianity as it would develop out of Rome. These earliest "believers" in "the Christ" saw the need to collect a group of religious writings that promoted their Gnostic religious beliefs which would be later be called "the New Testament". Hard at it may be for you to believe these "earliest Christians" had a completely different understanding of "the Christ" than what Rome would later give the world through their refutation of these earliest Christians and their "First New Testament" they did as I will show you. Rome would respond to this "allegorical" Gnostic understanding of "the Christ" as found in Marcion's First New Testament with their own refutation of it by Irenaeus around 180 C.E.; I call it the "literal" Roman Second New Testament.**

Let us begin a serious study into not only what these earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" and "Jesus" but also the origin of the New Testament and the religious beliefs of those who first gathered these existing documents in their day and what they believed about "the Christ" before Rome would change everything in the second through the fifth century through the pens of such Apologists as Irenaeus and others. Roman persecution by fire and sword would finally almost eradicate this knowledge from the face of the earth



and we are indebted to archeology which in the last 50 plus years has uncovered the evidence exposing this Roman forgery of "the Christ."

Sadly few know this information since being programed since childhood to believe that the New Testament, as given to us by Western Roman Christianity and as found in our traditional Christian Bibles is the original New Testament of the earliest church. Nothing could be further from the truth as I will show you in this website.

## "THE CHRIST" OR "THE JEWISH MESSIAH"?

There are two concepts in the New Testament that are often confused: the Jewish Messiah and "the Christ." By being conditioned with a "literal" interpretation of "the Christ" we fail to see how these two concepts have been blended in such a way as to make the truth obscure to say the least. Lacking necessary knowledge of Judaism and what Judaism and the unaltered Hebrew Scriptures teach about the Jewish Messiah we are relegated to accept a false belief concerning the Jewish Messiah which can be squarely blamed upon our corrupted versions of our Christian Old Testaments and its corresponding misquotations and misapplication of them as found in the New Testament. Coupled with this is the later Roman forgery of much of the New Testament in the names of apostles and Paul which paint this "Christ" in anti-Gnostic terms which completely contradict the earliest Christian's understanding of "the Christ." Rome never wanted you to know this and as stated up until 50 years ago with the discovery of the Nag Hammadi gospels this was kept from the minds of mankind by Roman censorship and adulteration of the First New Testament. Such goes unnoticed by all except those with the most critical eye and who possess this knowledge through scholarly study.

Most of us think that "the Christ" and "the Jewish Messiah" are the same; that the Jewish Messiah is "the Christ." Well he is to be "anointed" and we get the Greek word from this term but much needs to be explained as you will come to see & understand the similarities and the important differences between these two religious concepts will become very apparent to you the student as you continue through this website. Understand that without a doubt the Jewish Messiah was to be anointed to perform certain acts for God but this understanding of "anointing" is completely different from the concept of "the Christ" as taught by Gnostics like Paul and other writers of the Gospels. What is confusing that few ever sort out is the fact that although the Jewish human Messiah was to be "anointed" by God for God's work among mankind this was not the same as "the Christ" as taught by Gnostic Jews and Christians alike. The Gnostic "Christ" of the First New Testament was completely different from the Jewish Messiah and Rome has merged these two ideas in their Second New Testament and applied them to only one person; namely, Jesus of Nazareth. Rome will blur these two religious concepts with their later editing and redacting of Marcion's First Gnostic New Testament.

## THE EARLIEST UNDERSTANDING OF "THE CHRIST"

It might surprise you to know that the writers of the First New Testament understood "the Christ" as a revealer or liberator, rather than a savior or judge. His purpose was to spread knowledge from God which would enlighten mankind to their true identities; that they, as souls, were a part of God that was entrapped in a fleshly body and that they were through enlightenment and knowledge come to this understanding of their true essence in order to return to God at their death. These writers, including Paul, believed "the Christ" was pure spirit and only had a phantom body; he was not human. Don't stop reading as I will prove it to you when we compare the earliest manuscripts of the First New Testament from 140 C.E. and what they teach with those refuting them from 180 C.E. and later. Many Gnostics believed that "the Jesus," understood as the human appearance of "the Christ" just appeared to be human to his followers but was not a fleshly human. This is very important for our later understanding of who Jesus truly is as portrayed in the New Testament we have today. For Paul and other Gnostics like Marcion who gave us the First New Testament their "Christ" was their Cosmic Godman; an intermediary of sorts in a

## non-fleshly appearance among mankind.

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that this is understanding of the original "Christ" written about by Paul and others we find on the pages of the First New Testament; that the earliest writers of these first New Testament religious documents did not believe in a human Christ? For them this "Christ" was only an allegory of a Divine Principle that operated in the world and in every man:

*Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

## WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU

- **Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Marion, a Gnostic, believed that only Paul was a true apostle of "the Christ;" that Paul and only other Gnostics truly understood "the Christ's" message, and that other streams of thought within Christianity, like the Jewish Apostles and Disciples, had misinterpreted Jesus' mission and sayings?
- **Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Rome will counter these "allegorical" beliefs in a Divine Intermediary between man and God with a "literal" Christ in their refutation of Marcion and his First New Testament? Are you aware that this Second New Testament began with Irenaeus in 180 C.E.?
- These earliest beliefs concerning "the Christ" were later be considered heresy by mainline Western Christianity and Rome.
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that Gnostic beliefs and leaders infiltrated mainline Christianity and influenced the earliest Gentile authors of the Christian Scriptures (the New Testament)?
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that almost all the people of the New Testament era and area perceived their reality in Gnostic terms?
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that Paul was a Gentile Gnostic convert to Judaism whom Marcion espoused as the only person who truly understood this "Christ" and his message correctly?
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that the man (Marcion) who collected the first New Testament writings hated Jews and was not a believer in the "Jewish Messiah" but rather held beliefs in a "Cosmic Godman intermediary;" termed today the "Gnostic Savior"? We call this today **Docetism**.
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that Rome would counter Marcion's New Testament and Gnostic ideas beginning with Irenaeus in 180 C.E. with their own rendition of a "Second New Testament" where the Gnosticism of the earliest believers of "the Christ" will be nullified by anti-Gnostic treatises penned in the name of Paul and other Jewish Apostles?
- **Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that many epistles would be written by Rome in Paul's name to make it appear as if Paul was attacking Gnosticism when it fact he was a Gnostic?

***Wow! We have a lot to learn!***

Let us begin a serious study into not only what these earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" and "Jesus" but also the true origin of the New Testament, it writers, its original theology, and the religious beliefs of those who first gathered these existing documents in their day and what they believed about "the Christ" before Rome would change everything in the second century through the pens of such Apologists as Irenaeus.

**Sadly few know this information since being programed since childhood to believe that the New Testament as given to us by Western Roman Christianity and as found in our traditional Christian Bibles is the original New Testament of the earliest church and reflective of what the Jewish Apostles and the Jerusalem Church believed about "Jesus" and "the Jewish Messiah." Nothing could be further from the truth.** In this website I will attempt to show you in this website as we examine what was contained in the original New Testament given the world by Gnostic Gentile Anti-semitic Gnosticism. This is great but yet difficult study for most of this information will be new to our readers.



## A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO LEARN IN THIS WEBSITE

We will come to see by examination of the existing evidences brought to us today through the apologetics of the early Church Fathers as well as the gifts of archeology today that **the original Christians were Jewish and Gentile (Marcion-like) Gnostics** who were part of an international Gnostic tradition flourishing across the whole of the Merditeranean.

Like all Gnostics these Jewish and Gentile metaphysical believers encoded their mystical teachings in the form of allegorical myths as Marcion expressed in his presentation of the "Gnostic Savior" as "the Christ" in his First New Testament. Out of previous Jewish and Pagan myths they created the Christian myth cycle, of which the Jesus myth of the New Testament is a part. In light of this fact it should not be surprising to find that the earliest understanding of God's Christ was to be understood "allegorically" and not "literally" by the earliest Christians; both Jewish and Gentile. **This "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" would change in the second century at the hands of Gentile "Literalists."**

### We will come to see:

- The religious belief system of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus was often completely different than what we have been taught by Rome today regarding "the Christ" and "Jesus" as handed down from Rome and the New Testament as it now stands today. The original Christians synthesized and mixed elements from the Jewish allegorical myth of "the Christ/Sophia", the Moses-Joshua/Jesus story, and Pagan myths of the dying and resurrection Godman Osiris-Dionysus to create the Jesus myth in the earliest oral traditions which would later similar expression in Marcion's First New Testament as the allegorical Gnostic "Christ" (this is not the human Jesus/Christ we have been led to believe by Rome).
- Marcion, a Gnostic, gave the world the First New Testament. Marcion believed that only Gnostics truly understood Christ's message and that only Paul had truly understood Jesus where his Jewish Apostles had strayed from his message. These Marcionite Gnostics taught that other streams of thought within Christianity has misinterpreted Jesus' mission and sayings.
- Marcion, who gave us the First New Testament, understood Jesus' real message of salvation one; in which salvation was attained by mankind obtaining secret knowledge of their spiritual essence as being a creation of God (created in the image of God); that within all mankind is a spiritual spark of light or spirit that is literally a part of God. This self-knowledge of man's true identity had a redeeming function that helped the individual break free of the bondage of the flesh and the world.
- Paul was originally a Gentile Gnostic who later converted to Judaism who never believed in a human Jesus in the first place but held beliefs in the intermediary of the "Cosmic Christ" like other Gnostics. Paul, having never met the physical Jesus, is not concerned with an historical man or his teachings or message, but with the mystical "Christ in you." Later the Jesus myths was fleshed out as a more complex allegory in the form of a pseudo-history by Catholic Literalists and planted in a time line to give it historical validity. Paul will be later made to look as if he believed in a human Jesus after Rome theologically invented much of the Second New Testament and forged many letters in Paul's name in order to make is seem as if Paul refuted Gnosticism when he did not (Pastoral Epistles)
- The reasons for the Gnostic disdain for the Law as typified by Marcion and the Gentile Paul and reasons for it. Coupled with this will be the later additions to Marcion's New Testament in the name of the Apostles and Paul that will become the most vicious attacks on this Law in the entire New Testament (as found In Gal. 3 for example).

**The later forgery and insertion of the genealogies of Jesus into Marcion's First New Testament (the Gospel of Matthew and Luke) in order to give the allegorical and symbolic "Jesus" of Marcion's First New Testament a historical anchor; necessary if one is to give "the allegorical Christ" a historical lineage (literal). This explains why the genealogies from the hands of later Gentile Christians contradict each other since ignorant of Judaism and the Hebrew Old Testament.**

Today's New Testament and many of its religious dogmas and teachings are not reflective of the earliest beliefs of the "earliest Christians" and "followers of Jesus of Nazareth." Few Christians know this due to the lack of their scholarly study. None of the early "Allegorical Schools of Christianity" resemble the "Roman Literalist Christianity" with which we are familiar with today. This "literal" approach toward "the Christ" of Marcion's First New Testament which reflected the Ancient's understanding of the "Logos" is not the understanding of the "earliest Christians. The Roman "forgery mill" of the second century and later centuries destroyed as much of this Ancient Knowledge as possible and gave the world Rome's "Second New Testament" which completely annuls and distorts the ancient's earliest understanding of "the Christ." Rome's response to Marcion and his "Gnostic First New Testament" by their "Second New Testament" in their refutation of Marcion's earlier Gnostic New Testament not only created more books but other alterations, changes, and additions to the First New Testament of Marcion. At the heart of such changes is the alteration of the allegorical and metaphorical Gnostic Christ is not a "Literal Christ."

**We will further come to see as proved in this website:**

- **That Christian Catholic Literalism developed towards the end of the second century as a minor cult with the unique claim that Jesus as "the Christ" had Literally lived out the Pagan myth of the dying and resurrecting Godman. Of course this is not true. These Christian Catholic Literalists fabricated a lineage to link themselves back to the supposed disciples and forged several letters of in Paul's to make him appear anti-Gnostic when the reverse is actually true.**
- **Mirroring the success of the Mysteries of the Persian Godman Mithras, Christian Catholic Literalism gradually grew in popularity with the common man who already was enmeshed in sun worship and the mystery religions; becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. With the full might of the Roman state behind them, Christian Catholic Literalists waged a barbaric war against Christian and Jewish Gnosticism whom they branded "pagans" and "heretics." Along with this was Rome's pulling down of temples and libraries, burning books and dissidents, and plunging Western Civilization into the Dark Ages.**
- **The legacy of Christian Literalism has been a misguided obsession with the historical Jesus whom they recast in the image of the "solar Godman." The original Christians, however, taught that Jesus (in Greek the Hebrew name Joshua become Jesus) is a mythological figure symbolic for God's salvation: Joshua means "Jehovah/YHWH is salvation. This salvation of God is typified by various expressions: the Logos/Sophia/Wisdom (Proverbs); all who appears to mankind in different ways, according to the understanding of the individual.**
- **What the First New Testament originally contained in the way of "books" and "theologies" before Rome's alteration and corruption of it.**
- **The religious belief system of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus is often completely different than the way we have been taught by Rome today regarding "the Christ" and "Jesus" as coming from Rome's Second New Testament (and later chronological theological alterations)**
- **That Paul was originally a Gentile Gnostic who never believed in a human Jesus in the first place but a Cosmic Christ who was later made to look as if he believed in a human Jesus after Rome theologically invented much of the Second New Testament and forged many letters in his name.**
- **In the earliest form, found in the writings of Paul, the Jesus myth is a simple initiation allegory. Paul, having never met the physical Jesus, is not concerned with an historical man or his**



teachings or message, but with the mystical "Christ in you." Later the Jesus myths was fleshed out as a more complex allegory in the form of a pseudo-history by Catholic Literalists and planted in a time line to give it historical validity.

- The original Christians synthesized and mixed elements from the Jewish allegorical myth of "the Christ/Sophia", the Moses-Joshua/Jesus story, and Pagan myths of the dying and resurrection Godman Osiris-Dionysus to create the Jesus myth in the earliest oral traditions which would later similar expression in Marcion's First New Testament as the allegorical Gnostic "Christ" (this is not the human Jesus/Christ we have been led to believe by Rome).
- The Gnostic disdain for the Law and reasons for it as coming from the hand of Paul...a Gnostic Gentile. Coupled with this will be the latter additions to the book of Galatians by Rome in Paul's name (all of Galatians chapter 3 except one verse) that are the most vicious attacks on this Law in the entire New Testament.
- The forgery of the genealogies of Jesus that were later inserted into the Gospels after 180 C.E. (both Matthew and Luke) in order to give "the allegorical Christ" a historical lineage (literal); thus explaining from the hands of Gentiles why these genealogies contradict each other since ignorant of Judaism and the Hebrew Old Testament.
- The total lack of the infancy narratives from the First New Testament which only surface again after 180 C.E.; thereby giving this "Christ" a human-like appearance.
- None of the early schools of Christianity resemble the Literalist Christianity with which we are familiar today which was given us by Rome in the second century as depicted in their Second New Testament in their refutation of Marcion's earlier Gnostic New Testament which teaches an allegorical and metaphorical Gnostic Christ and not a literal Christ.

By understanding Christianity as part of the broad Gnostic tradition that flourished throughout the ancient world, we have been able to discover the true origins of Christianity and the truth concerning the New Testaments in our possession today which negates the earlier understanding of God's Christ by the earliest Christians who saw God's Christ allegorically and the historical Jesus not as the "literal" manifestation of "the Christ incarnated" but only as the personification of God's Logos, Sophia, Wisdom, etc. We fail as Christians to realize that this "anointing" or "Christ" is within us all; not just Jesus.

*1 Jn 2:27 27 But the anointing (the Christ) which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (KJV)*

- You will come to see how the Gentile Roman New Testament writers "LITERALIZED" previously existing allegorical "Divine Truths" held dear by the Ancients as well as both Jewish and Gentile Gnostics. These existing religious truths were NEVER intended to be taken "literally." The tragic result of this error and the Roman forgery mill is idolatry which passes for "Christian Orthodoxy" today due to our forged Roman New Testaments.
- You will come to see how the early Gentile Western Roman Church, who won the wars and rewrote history, also rewrote, altered, and invented over the next centuries many "religious writings" in the names of the apostles and Paul which are included in the New Testaments of today. This Roman "theological reinterpretation of allegorical religious truths and myths" was done by Roman scribes and monks in order to challenge, alter, and change existing religious beliefs held by the Jewish and Gnostic masses that did not conform to their existing Roman "theologies" and "literalized sun worship."
- You will come to see that much of the New Testament we have today is little more than the purposeful alteration of existing earlier Christian beliefs; such alteration that was to culminate in the creation of many religious documents out of thin air to which was giving supreme authority by Rome's attaching to these theological inventions the names of revered dead apostles and prophets. So doing Rome inadvertently created the most authoritarian religion in

history which was assured success by the power of the sword and state.

*And Somebody Either Did Not Know This Or Forgot To Tell You About This!*

## QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS BEFORE WE PUT OUR FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

As Christians and followers of Jesus we need to know the truth about our faith and about the faith of the early Jewish and Gentile Churches. *We need to realize that there are reasons why the Jewish Rabbis and Jewish people don't accept and believe in our "Christian Messiah" and our "Christianized Jesus."* In order to get the reasons for the Jewish rejection of Christianity and see these truths then we have to investigate several areas of study in order to acquire answers to the following questions:

- How did the New Testament as a collection of writings come into being and what were the factors behind it?
- Why the need for a New Testament anyway since salvation was already available to the Jew and Gentile within Judaism in their respective Covenants with God?
- Who collected the writings which were to be included in the New Testament, and on what principles? Was the First New Testament later altered, deleted, and parts invented to counter the earliest religious beliefs of the Jewish and Gentile Gnostics by Rome in the early second and later centuries?
- What was the religious belief and religious belief system of the person who first saw the need for a New Testament and who gave us the "FIRST" New Testament?
- Was Marcion's allegorical view of "the Christ" a deviation from what the Ancients had first believed about the "Logos" and "the Christ" or was the later refutation of it by the "Literalist Gentile Catholic Church"?
- How did this religious belief system Marcion, the originator of the "FIRST" New Testament, differ from the religious belief system of James & the Jerusalem Church & Jesus?
- Who found it necessary to respond to this "FIRST" New Testament with a "SECOND" New Testament which contradicted and corrected this "first" one in many places? Did other follow the trend of adding to and further correcting the first New Testament theologically?
- What was the motives of the writers of the "SECOND" New Testaments and where did these other books come from which were not previously available to the first collector?
- What were the new "theologies" which were added in subsequent additions to the "FIRST" New Testament" and how did the "theologies" differ and change from what the Jewish Church, Jesus, and the "early Christians" believe?
- What "replacement religious" doctrines can be discerned and seen in the "SECOND" New Testament writings and later collections & supplements which were later added to existing prior "New Testaments" which were not in the first "New Testament" of Marcion?
- What circumstances led to the fixing of a list, or canon, of authoritative books?
- What religious beliefs were lost from "the faith once given to the Saints" by the "literalization" of prior allegorical religious beliefs held by the Gnostics and the Jews by Rome changing the "First New Testament"?

## GETTING ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS WILL NOT BE EASY NOR QUICK

This is not going to be an easy or a quick study. The answers to these questions as well as many other we will encounter on this website will only be discerned by intensive and dedicated study of biblical history and New



Testament manuscript studies. This will entail the reader becoming familiar with Gnosticism and the religious beliefs of the earliest Christians and then comparing them with the later religious beliefs of Rome which come from the altered Roman New Testament. We will look to the early Church Fathers for much of our answers as often their writings incriminate their lack of integrity as custodians of Divine Truth. Our object is to find out what historical research reveals about the origin of the New Testament canon and the earliest meanings of "the Christ" as held by the earliest followers of Jesus before Rome corrupted such concepts in the second and later centuries.

## **LET US CONTINUE WITH OUR STUDY INTO MARCION AND THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT AND THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF "THE CHRIST"**

*Attention: On many of our articles the "E-mail" address is wrong; no longer "bennoah1@airmail.net"....time will not allow for changing them all....so if you wish to E-mail us please use the bottom "correct" E-mail.*



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*please contact us...we would love to help you with your studies...Shalom...and Baruch Hashem*



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# THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT: THE HISTORICAL JESUS...OR...THE CHRIST OF FAITH...WHICH IS IT?

This website is devoted to the study of the varying concepts of "the Christ" as held down through history; even since Egypt. That might be a surprise to many (that we find the concept of "the Christ" as far back as Egypt) but I assure you that this will not be the only surprise in store for the diligent student of this website. I will share truths and knowledge with the reader which will help him see for himself that the concept of "the Christ" as taught in the earliest New Testament collected by Marcion, the Gnostic, differs dramatically for the concept of "the Christ" in Rome's later refutation of the "Gnostic Christ" of Gnosticism which we find in today's New Testament. **This means that Rome's Second New Testament alters and changes the concept of "the Christ" of the earliest New Testament and the religious beliefs held by many of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus.** "Impossible" you say? Well just wait until we have finished our analysis of and reconstruction of the earliest New Testament (called the First New Testament in this site for clarity) and done the necessary studies to familiarize ourselves with the Gnostic understanding of "the Christ" and follow the alteration of this concept by later Western Christianity with its refutation of it in their later alteration of and additions to this earlier New Testament (called the Second New Testament in this site for clarity). Let me remind you that it is this altered New Testament which deviates from the earliest New Testament which we as Christians and followers of Jesus have inherited today. **This should make you seriously wonder if we have been taught correctly about "the Christ" and its implications for Jesus of Nazareth.**

## THE PROBLEM IN A NUTSHELL THAT CONFRONTS US IN THIS WEBSITE

- [The Historical Jesus...Or...The Christ Of Faith: Which Is Being Taught In The First New Testament?](#)
- [The Truth About Early Christianity And The Roman Cover-Up](#)
- [Who Was Jesus To The Earliest Chrestians-Christians?](#)

It is possible to come to the truth and received the needed answers concerning just who Paul was writing about in his authentic epistles that comprised the First New Testament. Today we benefit like no other time in being able to consult the evidences presented from archeology, biblical manuscripts, biblical language, anthropology, church history, and comparative religion in helping us piece together the picture correctly concerning just who this "Christ" was that we find on the pages of the First New Testament and the transformation of "the Christ" which we find in the Second New Testament.

But first let us get started on how this information was discovered and then get our feet wet as we begin to look into Gnosticism and their understanding of God, the Universe, and Salvation; remembering all the while that it was these Gnostics who first saw fit to collect the documents that comprised the First New Testament in the first place.



**Blessings...Craig Lyons M.Div.**

## **[Bet Emet's Pilgrimage: The Recovery Of Lost Truths Concerning The New Testament](#)**

- [Introduction Into The Orthodox Corruption Of The First New Testament](#)
- [What Is The Truth Concerning The New Testament? The Early Christians And Their Conflicting Literature](#)
- [The Truth Concerning New Testament Manuscripts And The Christian Corruption Of The First New Testament](#)
- [Scholars Tell The Truth: The Early Church & Their Theological Alterations Of The New Testament Over The Centuries](#)
- [The "First" And "Second" New Testaments: "Who" And "What" Was Behind Their Production?](#)
- [The New Testament: Inspiration And Authorship](#)
- [The Tension Between "Allegorical" Gnosticism and the "Literalism" Of Later Emerging Western Christianity](#)
- [Early Christianity And The Struggle For Orthodoxy](#)
- [The Challenge Of Walter Bauer Upon The Unity Of Early Christianity And Presumed "Orthodoxy"](#)
- [Did The Early Christological Controversies Affect The Scribes That Transmitted The New Testament?](#)
- [Defining "Orthodoxy" & The Intolerance Of Contrary Views & Need For Changing The Sacred Texts](#)
- [The Use Of Argumentative Literature In The Struggle For Orthodoxy](#)
- [The Developing Concept Of Scripture In The Christian Church](#)
- [The Canon Of The New Testament](#)
- [Who Decided The Hermeneutics...The Interpretation Of The Texts?](#)
- [Use Of Forgery In The Transmission Of New Testament Texts](#)
- ["Orthodox" Alterations Made To The Texts Of The New Testament](#)
  - [Do We Find Christian Censorship In Josephus #1](#)
  - [Do We Find Christian Censorship In Josephus #2](#)
  - [Suetonius And His Reference To Christ: Allegorical Or Literal Christ?](#)
  - [The Origin Of The Name "Christian"](#)

## **COMING TO UNDERSTAND GNOSTIC THEOLOGY AS EXPRESSED IN THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT**

It is impossible to understand Gnosticism and its theology which lie on the pages of today's New Testaments, which goes without detection by most, unless we become familiar with its religious tenants. This is important for several reasons. You will be startled at what you will find if you approach the New Testament possessing such knowledge concerning Gnosticism. Once possessing this knowledge of Gnosticism and then undertaking a comparison of the documents that first comprised the "First New Testament" of Marcion (140-150 C.E.) with the "Second New Testament" of Rome (180 C.E.) which follows later you will see for yourself how industrious and diligent efforts were made by Rome to change these earliest views of the Gnostics concerning "the Christ" and Jesus. We will come to find that the Gnosticism and the Gnostic "Savior" of the First New Testament has lost its allegorical understanding and presentation completely in the Second New Testament. Now in place of the Gnostic Savior we have a "historical-physical savior" through Rome's adulteration of the Gnostic First New Testament. Without understanding thoroughly the concepts of the "Logos," "Sophia" and "the Christ" as held by the earliest Christians and as reflected in the First New Testament before its revision by Irenaeus and others that come later then you will never come to see the truth about Jesus let alone God and His true plan of salvation given to the ancients. So we have to begin there. Once we come to understand these Gnostic religious concepts then the First New Testament of Marcion and the writings of Paul will become much clearer as to their intent and true "allegorical" message and presentation of "the Christ" that is lost to millions today.

## **GNOSTICISM...THE FAITH OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS???**

## [Introduction To Gnosticism And The Earliest Expression Of Christianity](#)

- [The Gnostic Worldview And Early Christianity](#)
- [First Things First...Getting Acquainted With The Gnosticism Expressed In The First New Testament](#)
- [The New Testament And "The Christ": Orthodoxy Or Heresy?](#)
- [The Religious Climate Of The Ancients And The Prevalence Of Gnosticism](#)
- [Gnosticism: What Did Gnostics Believe?](#)
- [The Valentinian Gnostics And The Eternal Problem Of Good And Evil And Its Remedy Through A Gnostic Christ](#)
- [Gnosticism: The Problem Of Evil And The Role Of The Law](#)
- [Gnosticism And The Descent Of The Soul](#)
- [The Earliest Gospel: Have You Heard It?](#)
  - [The Earliest Christians: Who Were They? #1](#)
  - [The Earliest Christians: Who Were They? #2](#)
  - [The Earliest Christians: Who Were They? #3](#)
  - [The Earliest Christians: Who Were They? #4](#)
  - [The Earliest Christians: Who Were They? #5](#)
  - [The Earliest Gnostic Christians And The Later "Literalists" Of Roman Christianity #6](#)
  - [The Therapeutae And The Essenes...As The Earliest Christians #7](#)
  - [Were The Essenes The Forerunners Of Gnostic Christians?](#)
    - [The Influence Of Zoroastrianism Upon Essene And Jewish Theology](#)
    - [The Persian Influence Upon The Jewish Messianic Belief \(Influence Upon The Essenes\)](#)
  - [The Exodus Allegory And The Gnostic Creation Of The Jesus Myth Of The New Testament](#)
  - [Contrasting The Jewish Messiah And The Pagan Godman](#)
    - [Awakening To "The Christ" Within You](#)
    - ["The Christ" As A Rising And Dying God: How Are We To Understand This?](#)
    - [Gnosticism And The Self-Knowledge Of The God-Spirit Within You](#)
    - [The Essence Of Gnostic Christianity](#)
  - [Evolution Of The Jesus Myth](#)
  - [Christianity And Its Lost Goddess...The Sophia](#)
- [The Various Schools Of Christian Gnosticism](#)
- [Gnostic Principles And The Levels Of Mankind](#)
- [The Two Alexandrian Teachers](#)
- [Marcion And Marcionites](#)
- [Manichaeism](#)

## **GNOSTICISM: THE LOGOS...THE SOPHIA...THE CHRIST...THE GNOSTIC SAVIOR**

Having been introduced in the above introduction to many of the religious tenants of Gnosticism and the religious beliefs of the earliest Christians concerning "the Christ" then it behooves us to look a little more deeply into just a few more concepts such as "the Logos," "the Sophia," and "the Christ" since these ideas will be later associated with both the allegorical Joshua-Jesus as well as the mythological historical Jesus by many of his followers. It again is extremely important that since the First New Testament was changed regarding the understanding of these concepts (whereby their "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" was "literalized") we then need to accurately understand these religious concepts as understood by the Ancients who gave them to us if we are ever to be able to pick up the Second New Testament today and ever hope to arrive at the truth concerning a supposed historical Jesus of Nazareth. Now let us begin at looking at the "Logos" as it has been understood since the beginning of time by mankind as far back as Egypt. We will find that these same "religious perceptions" were carried down throughout history as they expressed Eternal Divine Concepts of God since the beginning of mankind. Failure to understand these concepts guarantee that we will not be able to come to the truth concerning "the Christ".

## **THE LOGOS**



- [The Egyptian Logos..."The Word"](#)
- [Introducing The Concept Of The Logos](#)
- [The Logos Teaching](#)
- [The Gospel Of John And The True Meaning Of The "Logos"](#)
- [The "Logos" Personified](#)
- [The "Logos" As The Spiritual Sun](#)
- [The "Logos" As The Divine Expression Of The First Cause And His Will](#)
- [The "Logos" As Harmony](#)
- [The "Logos" And The Gospel Of John; Then How Are We To Understand The "Logos" And Jesus?](#)
- [The Ancient Meaning Of The "Logos" Which Is Lost To Almost All Mankind Today](#)

## **THE SOPHIA**

- [The Wisdom Books Of The Old Testament](#)
- [The Personal Conception Of Wisdom...Personified](#)
- [Introducing The Concept Of The Sophia](#)
- [Gnosticism And Feminine Imagery...The Principle Of The Sophia](#)
  - [The Gnostic Exegesis Of Genesis](#)
- [Connection Between The Christ And Sophia: God's Personified Wisdom](#)
- [Sophia, The Christ, And Jesus Of The New Testament](#)
- [The Christ As A Rising -Dying God: How Are We To Understand This?](#)
- [Sophia Texts Within The New Testament](#)
- [The Sophia According To Philo Of Alexandria](#)

## **HIDDEN TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE SOUL AS TAUGHT BY THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS**

- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #1](#)
- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #2](#)
- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #3](#)
- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #4](#)
- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #5](#)
- [Hidden Teachings Of The Gnostic Christians Concerning The Soul #6](#)

## **ROMAN CATHOLIC LITERALISM...& THE INVENTION OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS**

Up to now we have only scratched the surface of Christian "literalism". Now we plunge ourselves into the thick of it as we come to how how this "literal" interpretation of the Gnostic "allegorical Christ" developed towards the end of the second century. This began as a minor cult with a unique claim that Jesus has literally lived out the Pagan myth of the dying and resurrecting Godman. Literalists fabricated a lineage to link themselves back to the supposed disciples and forged letters of Paul to make him appear anti-Gnostic (Pastoral Epistles). Patterning much of the historical Jesus around the pattern of the Persian Godman Mithras Christian literalism would gradually grow into the official religion of the Roman Empire by the fourth century. With the full might of the Roman state behind them, Christian Literalist waged a barbaric war against Paganism and Christian Gnosticism, destroying temples and burning libraries and historical records of these movements along with dissidents, and plunging Western civilization into the Dark Ages. The legacy of Christian liberalism has not only been the loss of precious Ancient truths concerning God and His Christ but the misguided obsession with the historical Jesus which can be shown to today to be a mythological figure who appears to mankind in different ways according to the understanding of the individual based upon prior teachings (both good and not so good). In the end this Christ is the indwelling Spirit of God which lives within us and eternally call us to Himself. Now the facts and evidence of this historical deception by Roman Catholicism follows.

## PAUL...HIS AUTHENTIC EPISTLES ...HIS CHRIST...& HIS GOSPEL...NOT THE SAME ONE WE HEAR TODAY

- [Scholars Speak Out On Pauline Authorship Of The New Testament Epistles](#)
- [Pauline Authorship Of The New Testament Epistles....Chart](#)
- [The New Testament And Modern Scholarship: How Many "Christs" Are There In The New Testament?](#)
- [Was Paul A Gnostic? #1](#)
- [Was Paul A Gnostic? #2](#)
- [Was Paul A Gnostic? #3](#)
- [Was Paul A Gnostic? #4](#)
  - [The Pauline Epistles And His "Christ"](#)
  - [A Primer On The Authentic Epistles Of Paul](#)
  - [Did Paul Teach A "Heavenly Christ" Or An "Earthly Jesus"?](#)
  - [The Son Of God As "The Christ"](#)
  - [Paul's Gospel: A Synthesis Of Gnosticism, Mystery Religions, And Judaism](#)
  - [The Hidden Gnosticism Of The New Testament And The Original Pauline Writings](#)
  - [The Gnostic Theology Of Paul As Taught In His Authentic Epistles](#)
- [Pauline Gnostic Christianity vs Petrine Messianic Judaism: The Hidden Struggle In The New Testament](#)
  - [The Tubigen School...Noticing The James/Peter Split](#)
- [Paul's Conversion In The New Testament: Is It Trustworthy Or Should We Be Suspicious?](#)
- [The Date Of The Apostle Paul's Conversion: Dare We Look Close?](#)

## MARCION: THE MAN AND HIS THEOLOGY AS FOUND IN THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS

It is assumed that by now the reader has a fairly good grasp of Gnosticism and many of its religious beliefs. This will be necessary in analyzing Marcion and his First New Testament that espoused and taught such beliefs about "the Christ." Now let us look at the man and his religious beliefs and how they were reflected in his collection of Pauline literature and the earliest written gospel which makes up his First New Testament.

- [Marcion...The Man](#)
- [Marcion...The Gnostic](#)
- [Introducing Marcion Who Gave Us The First New Testament](#)
- [Marcion, The Man, And His First New Testament](#)
- [Marcion And His Theology And Its Legacy](#)
- [The First New Testament And "The Christ": Orthodoxy Or Heresy?](#)
- [The Hidden Gnosticism Of The New Testament And The Pauline Writings](#)
- [The First New Testament By Marcion: A Critical & Historical Study Of The First New Testament](#)
- [Marcion's "Gospel Of The Lord" Or "The Gospel Of Luke": What Came First?](#)
- [Marcion's Attempt To Set Aside The Old Testament Foundation By Accepting Paul's Gospel](#)

## EARLY CHURCH FATHERS ON MARCION...WHAT YOU WERE NEVER TOLD

- [Justin Martyr "On Marcion"...The Church Father Speaks...Should We Believe Him?](#)
  - [The Incriminating Testimony Of Justin Martyr Concerning The Christ Myth Of The New Testament](#)
- [Tertullian "On Marcion"...The Church Fathers Speak...Should We Believe Him?](#)

## MARCION & THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT (140 C.E.):



If you have been diligent to study with us this far in this website then by now you have a very good perspective and knowledge base regarding Gnosticism, Christian Gnosticism, the authentic Paul and his theology, and that later changes will be made to Marcion's First New Testament along with the existing Pauline writings. On top of that there will be creative theological invention at work in Rome's refutation of the Gnostic Christ. This will be accomplished by forgery, manipulation, addition, deletion, and outright invention of Scripture in the names of the "pillars" of the Jerusalem Church as well as Paul by proto-Roman Catholics which take control of the direction of the "Christian Church" in the second and later centuries. It is time we look not so much as "what as in the First New Testament" as we have already done this above; rather it is now time to look at **"what was not in the First New Testament"** in order to see how "theology" was created much later by the likes of Irenaeus and other textual forgers that will come later. This study will reveal what books and epistles that comprised the First New Testament and which were not in it as well. This study will enlighten us to what theologies are really "mixed" in the First New Testament and how this understanding of "the Christ" was altered later by Rome in their "Second New Testament".

- [Marcion's Canon](#)
- [The First New Testament Of Marcion The Gnostic](#)
- [The Non-Pauline Parts Of Galatians: What Are We Believing As Christians?](#)
- [Marcion And The Collection Of Christianity's First New Testament](#)
- [Were The 4 Gospels Written Early?](#)
  - [Introductory Statements- Were The Gospels Written Early? What Is The "Gospel Truth"?](#)
  - [Introductory Statements- Testimony Of The Apostolic Fathers As To The Existence Of The Early Date Of The 4 Gospels](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Clement Of Rome](#)
  - [Does Clement Of Rome Support That Gospel Of Luke Was Written Later Than Marcion's Gospel Of The Lord?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Ignatius Of Antioch](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The Didache](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Papias Of Hierapolis](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The Epistle Of Barnabas](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Polycarp Of Smyrna](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The Shepherd Of Hermas Of Rome](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The Second Epistle Of Clement](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Justin Martyr: The Silence Of Justin Is Deafening At 150 C.E.](#)
  - [The Testimony Of Irenaeus](#)
    - [Were The Gospels Written Early? The Conclusion](#)
    - [Were Fragments From The Gospel Of Mark Found At Qumran?](#)
  - [Irenaeus' Reference To The Gospel Of Matthew in 200 A.D.....Was It Really The Gospel Of The Hebrews Instead?](#)
  - [The Second New Testament Of 180 A.D. And Scholarly Testimony As To Authorship Of Its Contents](#)
- [The Lost Gospels Of The First Century](#)
  - [The Lost Gospels Of The First Century: The Gospel Of Paul](#)
  - [The Lost Gospels Of The First Century: The Recollections Or The Gospel Of Peter](#)
  - [The Lost Gospels Of The First Century: The Oracles Or Sayings Of Christ](#)
- [The Scholars Speak Concerning The Truth Of The New Testament: Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Masoretic Text...Is It In The Christian's Bible?](#)
- [The Muratorian Canon...The Unsettled New Testament Continues](#)
- [An Honest Look At The New Testament And The Gospels: By Whom And Where And When?](#)
- [The New Testament And The Early Controversies That Produced It](#)
- [The Books Of The New Testament Which At First Were Not Inspired](#)
- [Were The Church Fathers Competent To Decide What Books Were To Be In The New Testament?](#)
- [The Critical & Chronological Study Into The Canonization Of The New Testament: Can This Be The Fruit Of The Holy Spirit?](#)

- [The Influence Of Marcion Upon The Formation Of The Second New Testament](#)
- [The Influence Of Irenaeus Upon The Formation Of The Second New Testament](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 3rd Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 4th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 5th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 6th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 7th Through The 10th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 16th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
  - [The Testimony Of The 17th Century Church Fathers...Have You Heard Them?](#)
- [The Inescapable Conclusion](#)

## THE STRUGGLE FOR ORTHODOXY....ROMAN "LITERALISM" WINS

- [The Tension Between Allegorical Gnosticism And The Literalism Of The Later Emerging Western Christianity](#)
- [Adoptionism: The Earliest Belief About Jesus](#)
- [The Roman Purge Of Truth And The Destruction Of The Library Of Egypt](#)
- [The Influence Of Marcion Upon The Formation Of The New Testament](#)
- [Marcion's "Gospel Of The Lord" Or The "Gospel Of Luke"...Which Came First?](#)
- [The Influence Of Irenaeus Upon The Formation Of The New Testament](#)
- [Triumph Of Literal Christianity Over Allegorical Christianity #1](#)
- [Triumph Of Literal Christianity Over Allegorical Christianity #2](#)
- [Triumph Of Literal Christianity Over Allegorical Christianity #3](#)
- [Triumph Of Literal Christianity Over Allegorical Christianity #4](#)
- [Did The Essenes And Their Messianic Beliefs Evolve Into The Gnostic Christ?](#)

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# THE HISTORICAL JESUS...OR THE CHRIST OF FAITH: WHICH IS BEING TAUGHT IN THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT?

What I will show the readers and students of this website is that "the Christ" as taught by the earliest Christians as found in the earliest gospel collection and the authentic Pauline epistles that comprised the First New Testament in 140 C.E. is a completely different "Christ" from the one that will be later taught by the Four Gospels and later epistles which will be added to this existing "New Testament" in 180 C.E. and later. Let me say it a different way: There is a big difference between "the Christ of Faith" and "the Historical Jesus." One of these depictions we will find is "real" and the other possibly not so real and you will be surprised at what the evidence amassed on this website will reveal. Most of you have never encountered this fact nor most likely ever studied deeply enough to encounter this problem in New Testament studies but let me assure you that it exists. So let us begin to see to examine this problem in detail.

Scholars tell us that the earliest Gospel is from the writer of the Gospel of Mark. We don't know who that someone was, or where he wrote his story. We are not even sure when he wrote it, but we do know that several decades had passed since the writing of this account of Jesus and the events that supposedly occurred. Later generations gave this storyteller the name of "Mark," but if that was his real name, it was only by coincidence.

Other writers of the New Testament Jesus will follow after this first account of Jesus, and they will enlarge upon the story as it existed in this first account of Jesus. They will borrow much of what the earlier writer had written and they will rework it in their own particular way and put in some additional material that suited them and their particular interpretation of Jesus. By the time another half century had passed, almost everyone who followed the religion of these storytellers accepted their work as an account of actual historical events and a real historical man. And so did the people who came afterwards, for close to two thousand years. Most likely if you are a reader of this website then you do today as well.

## THE BIRTH OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

True Biblical Scholarship began to awake around the 1800's. About two centuries ago, these "Gospels" began to be subjected to some searching examination. Not only were these Gospels found to contradict one another on important matters, it was eventually realized that they had been conceived and put together in ways, and with motivations, which suggested that they were not reliable historical accounts. That process of scholarly examination has continued to this day, with results that have undermined the very foundations of the Christian faith.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever noticed that "the Christ" as taught in the earliest Pauline epistles is quite different than "the Christ" as taught in the Gospels?

The story told in the Gospel of Mark first begins to surface toward the end of the first century CE. Over the years of my Biblical studies as I got deeper and deeper into critical New Testament study following Seminary I began to **notice that there was a big difference between "the Christ" taught in the epistles and "Christ Jesus" taught in the Synoptic Gospels.** To make matters worse there is again a big difference between the "Christ Jesus" taught in the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. I had on my hands 3 different pictures of Christ Jesus to choose from. As if that was not enough I wondered and reasoned to no avail how one person could have at least two completely different salvation messages and different accounts of his personality and nature. The answers would come over time as I would discover that there were various sects within early Christianity each with their own version of "the Christ" and "Jesus." We encounter a mixture of these beliefs in the depiction of Christ Jesus in the New Testament and never realize that what we are reading is this "mixture." **The biggest problem in all my studies over the years was about to surface for me. The more detailed my studies became the more troubled that I would become by the curious fact that when I searched for that story of the "historical Jesus" in all the non-Gospel documents written before and during the time of the supposed life of Christ Jesus it was nowhere to be found. It is missing even from certain documents produced after that time period' even extending into the latter half of the second century.** Josephus is reported to have the earliest account of Jesus as Messiah outside of the New Testament but **research into this account by Josephus concerning Jesus only revealed it to be a later Christian forgery; written in order to deflect such charges as stated above.**

## THE EPISTLES AND THE GOSPELS DON'T AGREE CONCERNING CHRIST JESUS

**It is mandatory that we state at the outset that the epistles of Paul which teach of "the Christ" predated the Gospels by at least a half a century or more. That means that the authentic Pauline writings are the earliest account of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" that we have. Also let it be said that although these existing Pauline epistles will have an influence upon the later Gospel writers when they choose to write upon "Christ Jesus" later that century and even into the next amazingly if we had to rely on the letters of the earliest Christians, such as Paul and those who wrote most of the other New Testament epistles, we would be hard pressed to find anything resembling the details of the Gospel story.**

Too many of us are conditioned not by exegesis (drawing out of the text the intended meaning) but by eisegesis (reading into the text a preexisting belief). **If we did not read the Gospel picture of a human Jesus into what Paul and the others say about their "Christ Jesus", we could not even tell that this figure found in the Pauline literature as his "Christ", the object of their worship, was a man who had recently lived in Palestine and had been executed by the Roman authorities with the help of a hostile Jewish establishment.** I want you to take a challenge. Start reading after the Gospel of John and read through the New Testament. In so doing pretend, if possible, that you have never read a Gospel in your whole life and they you possess no knowledge of a human Jesus. After you have completed this task then ask yourself if what you read concerning "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" was the account of a human being or a Spiritual principal or concept among mankind.

**Answer for yourself:** The concept expressed above most likely took your breath away but it is true. If we separate the Pauline epistles which came first from the Gospel accounts which honestly would surface some 50 to 100 years later, or lets say if we have never read the Gospel accounts of Jesus then would we, only by reading the Pauline epistles, come away with the idea that Paul's "Christ" was a walking, living, breathing human being like ourselves?

We must go back in time as if we have the benefit of a time machine. Let us remember that this is exactly the situation that existed for over a half century before any Gospel was written. **The Pauline "Christ" and "Christ**



**Jesus" was the earliest Gospel of the earliest Christians.** It is our task in the website to prove to ourselves just who Paul was referring to when he writes:

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just possible that when Paul is writing of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" that is not in fact speaking of any such human being but only a "Spiritual Concept" among mankind? Is Paul speaking of the "Logos" as "the Christ" which dwells within each of God's creatures and we not know it?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that if we remove our tendency to eisegete instead of exegete Biblical passages and take off our Gospel-colored spectacles when reading the early Christian writers that we would find that all of them, Paul especially, have been telling us in simple and unmistakable terms exactly what the earliest Christians did believe in, and what "the Christ" they all worshiped really was? Would we then, removed from the conditioning of the later Gospels, see that "the Christ" of the earliest Christians and as expressed in the Pauline corpus of writings was not a human being as supposed?

## HOW CAN WE KNOW FOR SURE HOW TO INTERPRET "THE CHRIST OF FAITH" FROM "THE HISTORICAL JESUS"?

Gaining an understandable picture of the diverse early Christian movement, to which Paul's writings are the most important surviving witness, is CRITICAL and , requires that we delve into some of the thinking, diverse religious beliefs, and theologies of the age among both Jews and gentiles. In particular we need to examine and understand the philosophy, views of the universe and kinds of religious myths those people believed in. Christianity, like all other human expression, was a product of its time and did not arise in isolation from the thought world around it. Christianity was also by nature a sect, in that it adopted and advocated new ideas which brought it into conflict with the milieu it grew out of. Thus its development must be understood in the context of how sects behave and interact with the world around them. For our study we need to simply understand that there existed Jewish Christianity, Gnostic Christianity, and the later Gentile Christianity.

There is another problem. As part of this picture of the times, we will need to be aware of not only these above different and competing strands of early Christianity but of the crossover influence which took place between Judaism and the Greco-Roman society it lived in. That is critical as well. Even as it struggled to stave off integration, Jewish culture, especially in the Diaspora (those Jewish enclaves distributed throughout the Roman empire), absorbed a great deal from its wider environment. Nor was the process a one-way Street. Jewish monotheism and ethics were embraced by great numbers of gentiles who joined Jewish synagogues and sects in varying degrees of conversion. One of the features of Christianity was the formation of gentile groups who adopted Jewish ideas and practices as mentioned above, eventually considering themselves the new inheritors of the Jewish God's promise. These mutual crossover influences gave rise to a new faith which was a hybrid of both cultures, and a product which would shape the future of the Western world (Roman Catholicism).

And yet to use the word "Christianity" or a phrase like "the Christian movement" is fundamentally misleading. It implies that the phenomenon being studied was a single entity, something unified, that it began in a particular location out of an identifiable set of circumstances and events. It also implies that it was all set in motion by a specific historical figure, Jesus the Christ, and by the actions of those who responded to him. But such a picture evolved only later as we will see. In reality, "Christianity" in its beginnings was much more diffuse. It was made up of several unrelated strands of activity within the religious philosophy and culture of the time, strands which lacked any common point or figure of origin!!! Only through a unique set of circumstances did all of those strands come

together to produce the picture of Christian origins which the world has envisioned for so long.

## SO WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

The focal point of that coming together was the first Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, which created the figure of Jesus of Nazareth and made him the personification of all the preceding strands. Once that turn in the road was taken (around the years 85 to 90), the picture thus created of the human Jesus of Nazareth gradually impacted on the different expressions of the movement until eventually all those who styled themselves believers in "the Christ" thought that their faith had begun with an actual man who had lived at a recent time in history and had given rise to all the varied beliefs and practices they shared.

Unknown to most all but the most serious students of early Christianity is that before this characterization of Jesus by the writer of the Gospel of Mark the earliest believers in this fledgling movement believed in a "Christ" or "Son of God" who was a divine Savior, but who was not yet regarded as having been on earth.

This is the problem. We will examine in detail all the evidences that can be amassed together and in so doing we will see most clearly that the earliest Christian believers believed in Paul's "Christ" which was not a historical person" and later comes a branch from this movement which will "incarnate the Christ" within flesh and place him in a historical timeline. They promote their own divergent belief "the Christ" from what has been understood concerning "the Christ" as the "Logos" since the beginning of time through developing a storehouse of religious writings which I call for simplicity sake the "Second New Testament." In so doing they alter and change First New Testament and what it taught originally about "the Christ." With this overview in mind, the basic evidences in this religious detective story can be laid out. You will see as you study that the Gospel story is an amalgamation of two principal and separate elements, who up to that time had never associated, until unique circumstances arose which led "Mark" to bring them together in his Gospel.

Since Paul was the first New Testament writer and his epistles were collected by Marcion the Gnostic because he felt that only Paul had understood "the Christ" correctly and only Paul taught the truth concerning "the Christ" and his message it behooves us right now to look at Pauline Christology (Sophiaology) at the beginning of this website as a type of introduction and we will at a later time examine the Gospel and later epistle additions which will attempt and sadly succeed in clouding for us Paul's original picture of "the Christ" as taught in his authentic epistles before later forgeries are added to the New Testament in 180 C.E. by Irenaeus and others.

Let us continue this study.





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## THE TRUTH ABOUT EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THE ROMAN COVER-UP

Only a few Christians every learn that on the site where the Vatican now stands there once stood a Pagan temple. In fact many early churches were built upon the ruins of Pagan temples. Here on what is known as the Vatican Pagan priests one stood and observed sacred ceremonies, **which early Christians found so disturbing that they tried to erase all evidence of them ever having been practiced.**

**Answer for yourself:** What was the problem that precipitated Christianity trying to destroy all the evidence of these "Pagan" rites? **Why did Rome not only destroy such knowledge but many of the world's libraries as well?** One might assume that we are speaking of gruesome sacrifices of infants or virgins or some type of obscene orgies but that is not the case when one begins a person study into this matter. This is of course what we have been led to believe but that is not the truth of the matter.

**Answer for yourself:** So what was it?

Where in the Vatican where today the gathered faithful Roman Catholics revere their Lord Jesus Christ, the ancients worshiped another godman who, like Jesus, had been miraculously born on December 25 before three shepherds. In this ancient sanctuary Pagan congregations once glorified a Pagan redeemer who, like Jesus, was said to have ascended to heaven and to have promised to come again at the end of time to judge the quick and the dead. On the same spot where the Pope celebrates the Catholic mass, Pagan priests also celebrated a symbolic meal of bread and wine in memory of their savior who, just like Jesus, had declared:

***He who will not eat of my body and drink of my blood, so that he will be made one with me and I with him, the same shall not know salvation*** (Mithraic inscription quoted in J. Godwin, **Mystery Religions In The Ancient World**, 1981, p. 28).

Now the above quote should take your breath away especially in light that before now you believed that Christ Jesus brings a unique revelation at the Passover and announces before his disciples and apostles the same adage. As my studies advanced over the years I was shocked to find **innumerable parallels between Christ Jesus of the New Testament and the Pagan Mysteries and Pagan godmen and goddesses.** As I began to uncover such extraordinary similarities between the story of Jesus and Pagan myth I was stunned and devastated; especially since being an ordained Pastor and Seminary graduate devoted to teaching God's truth. I quickly realized that I might not have "God's Truth" as expressed in my New Testament or at least not understood what is being said as I needed. You should agree that we both have been brought up in a culture which portrays Paganism and Christianity as entirely antagonistic religious perspectives.

**Answer for yourself:** But are they? Could our current Roman Christianity only be a "literal" presentation of the SAME beliefs held by the ancients and earliest Jewish and Gentile Gnostic Christians which they understood only as "allegories" of Divine Truths?

**Answer for yourself:** Could I be mistaken about most of what I have been taught since childhood because my

inherited religious documents from Rome have been approached with "literal" spectacles instead of "allegorical" spectacles?

**Answer for yourself:** Besides that could my Christian Bible be a forgery in many places and I not know it?

**Answer for yourself:** How could such astonishing similarities, likenesses, analogies, and resemblances between ancient Gods and Goddesses and the Jesus story in the Roman New Testament that I was uncovering in my scholarly study be explained?

Needless to say the more I read and studied the more I was consumed and inspired to uncover the reasons for such parallels and had to search even harder and even further to find the answers. In the beginning I was confronted with a theological puzzle which I felt I had but a few pieces but several years later as the pieces and "nuggets" came together I began to see a very clear picture of why such parallels between the Pagan mysteries and the Christ Jesus of the New Testament exist. The more read and looked and collected book after book the more resemblances I found. Soon very few if any accounts of the New Testament Christ Jesus were "unique". Over the years of my study as facts and evidence mounted from such study I felt compelled to completely review my understanding of the relationship between Paganism and Christianity. The unbelievable occurred to me, a Seminary graduate and ordained Pastor due to the collection of revealing facts and evidence amassed from my studies over many years. What I had previously regarded as unquestionable had to be rethought in light of the findings my studies and I had to imagine possibilities that at first seemed impossible. At first I was frightened by what I reasoned but the facts and discoveries I had made in my studied reassured me that God never desired that we place our faith in "lies" and "untruths." God desires we place our faith in what is TRUE. That axon always reassured me as the studies advanced to even deeper levels and as more puzzle pieces came together. Soon the conclusions were inescapable and for me became the simplest and most obvious way of accounting for the evidence that I had amassed.

In America under the influence of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism we have become ingrained to believe that the story of Christ Jesus in the New Testament is to be taken "literally" and is the "gospel truth." **But the more I had studied during the years of my Pastorate I had become absolutely convinced that the story of Jesus is not the biography of a historical Messiah, but a myth based on perennial Pagan stories. Now having the facts behind this story I no longer wondered why the Jesus did not believe in my Christian Jesus.**

**Christianity was not a new and unique revelation but actually a Jewish adaptation of the ancient Pagan Mystery religion.** It may sound unbelievable to the reader but that is only because you have not done the necessary scholarly studies to reveal the facts and evidence that exists that proves the above statement. The above statement is firmly based and provable beyond any doubt by any serious seeker of the truth concerning the New Testament Christ Jesus and is based upon rock solid historical and archeological evidences as well as available historical sources and the latest scholarly research. As a Pastor who would be forced to resign based upon my studies my heart was troubled about the untold number of typical Christians who would never know that anything is wrong about their "Jesus" and who, unlike me, did not possess the abilities to due such scholarly study. After many days of soul searching I decided to make this information accessible to the general reader. Many of the articles included in this website have extensive references and many sources are listed for those who wish to analyze the data presented more thoroughly.

## HOW DID WE LOSE THIS TRUTH?

Although still radical and challenging today, many of the ideas expressed on this website are actually far from new. **As long ago as the Renaissance, mystics and scholars saw the origins of Christianity in the ancient Egyptian religion.** Visionary scholars at the turn of the nineteenth century also made comparable conjectures to what my studies were showing me. Regardless of who you are if you do the necessary studies you will find the same things that scholars before you as well as presently uncover. In recent decades, modern academics have repeatedly pointed toward the possibilities that I will share on this website. Yet few have dared



to boldly state the obvious conclusions that I drew from my studies. Social ostracism awaited those who did and even some Pastors such as Robert Taylor in the 1840's were put in prison for sharing such truths.

**For 2,000 years the West has been dominated by Roman Catholicism and the idea that Christianity is sacred and unique while Paganism is primitive and the work of the Devil. To even consider that they could be parts of the same tradition has been simply unthinkable.** Therefore, although the true origins of Christianity have been obvious all along as attested to by one's cursory examination of existing historical studies, few have been able to see them, because to do so requires not only access but a radical break with the conditioning of our culture. If one has the ability to due such studies then I can assure them that there are in store for a complete reappraisal of the origins of Christianity.

## THE PAGAN MYSTERIES...WHAT ARE THEY?

Paganism is a "dead" religion. Let me say it another way. Paganism is an "exterminated" religion. It may be a little premature but I am referring basically to Gnosticism in all it variant forms. It did not simply fade away into oblivion. It was actively suppressed and annihilated, its temples and shrines desecrated and demolished, and its great sacred books thrown onto bonfires. No living lineage has been left to explain its ancient beliefs. So, the Pagan worldview has to be reconstructed from the archaeological evidence and texts that have survived, like some giant metaphysical jigsaw puzzle.

**Pagan** was originally a derogatory term meaning country-dweller, used by Christians to imply that the spirituality of the ancients was some primitive rural superstition. **But this is not true. Paganism was the spirituality which inspired the unequaled magnificence of the Giza pyramids, the exquisite architecture of the Parthenon, the legendary sculptures of Phideas, the powerful plays of Euripides and Sophocles, and the sublime philosophy of Socrates and Plato.**

Pagan civilization built vast libraries to house hundreds of thousands of works of literary and scientific genius. Its natural philosophers speculated that human beings had evolved from animals. Its astronomers knew the Earth was a sphere, which, along with the planets, revolves around the sun. They had even estimated its circumference to within one degree of accuracy. The ancient Pagan world sustained a population not matched again in Europe until the eighteenth century. In Greece, Pagan culture gave birth to the concepts of democracy, rational philosophy, public libraries, theater, and the Olympic Games, creating a blueprint for our modern world (T. Freke and Peter Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, p. 16-18).

**Answer for yourself:** Having looked at some of the scientific and social accomplishments of Paganism, what was the spirituality that inspired these momentous cultural achievements?

Most people associate Paganism with either rustic witchcraft or the myths of the gods of Olympus as recorded by Hesiod and Homer. Pagan spirituality did indeed embrace both. The country people practiced their traditional shamanic nature worship to maintain the fertility of the land and the city authorities propped up formal state religions, such as the worship of the Olympian gods, to maintain the power of the status quo.

**It was, however, a third, more mystical, expression of the Pagan spirit that inspired the great minds of the ancient world.** The thinkers, artists, and innovators of antiquity were **initiates of various religions known as Mysteries.** These remarkable men and women held the Mysteries to be the heart and soul of their culture. The Greek historian Zosimos writes that without the Mysteries "life for the Greeks would be unlivable" for "the sacred Mysteries hold the whole human race together." The eminent Roman statesman Cicero enthuses:

***These Mysteries have brought us from rustic savagery to a cultivated and refined civilization. The rites of the Mysteries are called "initiations" and in truth we have learned from them the first principles of life. We have gained the understanding not only to live happily but also to die with better hope*** (J.

Campbell, Occidental Mythology, 1964, p. 268). , quoting Cicero, *On the Laws*, 2.36).

Unlike the traditional rituals of the official state religions, which were designed to aid social cohesion, the **Mysteries were an individualistic form of spirituality**, which offered mystical visions and personal enlightenment. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*: 1985, p. 291, states: "Dionysus is the god of the exceptional. As the individual gains in independence, the Dionysus cult becomes a vehicle for the separation of private groups from the polis. Alongside public Dionysiac festivals there emerge Dionysus mysteries." W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and the Greek Religion*, 1952, p. 50 states: "It is this emergence of mystery religions into the stream of history that is meant by those who refer to the great religious revival of the sixth century. Henceforth... the choice of belief being a matter of individual temperament." R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, 1992, p. 28, states Jaeger's view that "From the fourth century BC on, the form of Greek religion that appealed to most people of higher education was not the religion of the Olympic gods but that of ***the mysteries, which gave the individual a more personal relationship with the Godhead.***" The Mystery religions were ideally suited to the conditions following Alexander's conquest, when previously discrete cultures were thrown together. The science of comparative religion was born and old national and racial deities reinvented. The new Mediterranean *koiné* presented to the individual new challenges and new opportunities. **The individualistic salvation cults of the Mysteries flourished in this environment.**

Initiates underwent a secret process of initiation, which profoundly transformed their state of consciousness. The great Pagan philosophers were the enlightened masters of the Mysteries. Although they are often portrayed today as dry academic intellectuals, they were actually enigmatic gurus:

- **Pythagoras**
- **Plato**
- **Empedocles**
- **Socrates**
- **Heraclitus**
- **Anaxagoras**
- **Diogenes**
- **The inspired playwright Euripides**

All of these idiosyncratic sages were steeped in the mysticism of the Mysteries, which they expressed in their philosophy. Olympiodorus, a follower of Plato, tells us that his master paraphrased the Mysteries everywhere.

**At the heart of Pagan philosophy is an understanding that all things are One. The Mysteries aimed at awakening within the initiate a sublime experience of this Oneness.**

Sallustius declares: ***"Every initiation aims at uniting us with the World and with the Deity"*** (S. Angus, *Mystery Religions*, 1925, p. 70, quoting from *Concerning the Gods and The Universe*, p. 4).

Plotinus describes the initiate transcending his limited sense of himself as a separate ego and experiencing mystical union with God:

***As if borne away, or possessed by a god, he attains to solitude in untroubled stillness, nowhere deflected in his being and unbusied with self, utterly at rest and become very rest. He does not converse with a statue or image but with Godhead itself. And this is no object of vision, but another mode of seeing, a detachment from self, a simplification and surrender of self, a yearning for contact, and a stillness and meditation directed towards transformation. Whoever sees himself in this way has attained likeness to God; let him abandon himself and find the end of his journeying*** (quoted in J.

Gregory, *The Neoplatonists*, 1987, p. 188)

Hopefully these few examples will help us rethink the spirituality provided by the Pagan Mysteries to their



initiates.

Roman influenced Christianity has made sure that Christians are indoctrinated with an inaccurate and outdated view of Paganism. We had been taught to imagine a primitive superstition, which indulged in idol worship and bloody sacrifice, and dry philosophy. They were painted to us as if ignorant and devotees of false gods who had lost their way in false worship. Some of us are even familiar with various Greek myths, which showed the partisan and capricious nature of the Olympian gods and goddesses. All in all, Paganism seemed primitive and fundamentally alien. But after learning the "key" to understanding the Pagan Mysteries this all changed for me. The key is simple and involved how we are to approach and interpret what we read: an "ALLEGORICAL" or a "LITERAL" interpretation of the Pagan Mysteries.

After many years of study, however, my understanding of both Paganism and the Christ Jesus of the New Testament has been transformed and the puzzle has come together. It was so simple but without the "keys" then one wanders as he studies Pagan Religions seeking for the understanding of the parallels with the Christ Jesus of the New Testament. At times I felt as if I was in a maze of unrelated thought; only glimpsing a "connection" here and there; never achieving my desired end. It appears as a maze of collected traditions until one receives "Gnosis" and the "key" to understanding the message of the Ancients.

Pagan spirituality was actually the sophisticated product of a highly developed culture. The state religions, such as the Greek worship of the Olympian gods, were little more than outer pomp and ceremony. The real spirituality of the people expressed itself through the vibrant and mystical "Mystery religions". At first underground and heretical movements, these Mysteries spread and flourished throughout the ancient Mediterranean, inspiring the greatest minds of the Pagan world, who regarded them as the very source of civilization.

## "OUTER" AND "INNER" MYSTERIES AS RELATED TO THE DYING AND RESURRECTING GODMAN

Each Mystery tradition had exoteric Outer Mysteries, consisting of myths, which were common knowledge, and rituals, which were open to anyone who wanted to participate. This was intended for the common man. This was the "literal" understanding of the Pagan mysteries which was not true to reality but was a disguise of the inner truth. There were also esoteric Inner Mysteries, which were not open to just anyone. These inner mysteries were "allegories" that contained a sacred secret known only to those who had undergone a powerful process of initiation. Initiates of the Inner Mysteries had the mystical meaning of the rituals and myths of the Outer Mysteries revealed to them, a process that brought about personal transformation and spiritual enlightenment.

The philosophers of the ancient world were the spiritual masters of the Inner Mysteries. They were mystics and miracle-workers, more comparable to Hindu gurus than dusty academics. The great Greek philosopher Pythagoras, for example, is remembered today for his mathematical theorem, but few people picture him as he actually was a flamboyant sage, who was believed to be able to miraculously still the winds and raise the dead.

At the heart of the Mysteries were myths concerning a dying and resurrecting godman, who was known by many different names:

- In Egypt he was Osiris,
- In Greece Dionysus,
- In Asia Minor Attis,
- In Syria Adonis,
- In Italy Bacchus,

- **In Persia Mithras.**

**Answer for yourself:** Was this "dying and resurrecting godman" to be understood "literally" or "allegorically" by those who were initiates in the Pagan Mysteries?

**Fundamentally all these godmen are the same mythical being.** As was the practice from as early as the third century BCE, the **term Osiris-Dionysus came to be used to denote this godman's universal and composite nature.**

**From the fifth century BCE philosophers such as Xenophanes and Empedocles had ridiculed taking the stories of the gods and goddesses literally. They viewed them as allegories of human spiritual experience.** The myths of Osiris-Dionysus should not be understood as just intriguing tales, therefore, but as a symbolic language, which encodes the mystical teachings of the Inner Mysteries. Because of this, although the details were developed and adapted over time by different cultures, the myth of Osiris-Dionysus has remained essentially the same.

The various myths of the different godmen of the Mysteries share what the great mythologist Joseph Campbell called "the same anatomy". Just as every human is physically unique yet it is possible to talk of the general anatomy of the human body, so with these different myths it is possible to see both their uniqueness and fundamental sameness. **On the face of it they look very different, yet they are essentially the same story. Similarly, the tales told about the godmen of the Pagan Mysteries are essentially the same, although they take different forms.**

The dramatization of the myth of Dionysus at Eleusis is really the origin of tragedy and theater. The initiates into the Pagan Mysteries were not a passive audience. **They initiates into the Pagan Mysteries were participants who shared in the passion of the godman whose death and rebirth was SYMBOLIC OF THEIR OWN DEATH AND SPIRITUAL REBIRTH as they died to the "old man of flesh" and realized that within them dwells "the Christ of God" called by them many different names. They awoke to the realization of the mystical knowledge imparted to them that they were each manifestations of God within flesh. The awakening to the Divine Presence that resided within them was likened to the death and rebirth of the Godman Dionysus (a man created in the image of God but who had forgotten it). So we see the death and resurrection of the Godman was "allegorical" and was never to be understood "literally."**

The Mysteries did not offer religious dogmas to simply be believed, but a myth to be entered into. Initiation was not about learning something, but about experiencing an altered state of awareness of one's self.

**Answer for yourself:** Why did the myth enacted by the Pagan Mysteries have such a profound effect?

**The answer is that within the myth of the dying and resurrecting godman were encoded secret teachings!**

## **THE PAGAN MYSTERIES AND ENCODED SECRET TEACHINGS..."ALLEGORICAL" OR "LITERAL"?**

In antiquity the word *mythos* did not mean something "untrue," as it does for us today. Superficially a myth was an entertaining story, but to the initiated it was a sacred code that contained profound spiritual teachings. D. Fidler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, 1993, p. 6 states: "The teachings of the mystery religions were characteristically embodied in allegory, myth, and symbolic imagery, both as "teaching stories" and as basic paradigms of human experience. Certain philosophical schools, especially the Stoics and Platonists, drew upon traditional myths to illustrate insights, which transcend merely logical description. Moreover, they held that the interpretation of the traditional myths, like the pursuit of philosophy itself, constituted, at its core, a process of



initiation." Plato comments, "It looks as if those also who established rites of initiation for us were no fools, but that there is a hidden meaning in their teachings" (Plato, *Phaedo*, 69c). 38 He explains that it is "those who have given their lives to true philosophy" who will grasp the "hidden meaning" encoded in the Mystery myths, and **so become completely identified with the godman in an experience of mystical enlightenment** (Ibid., 69d: "As those who understand the mysteries say, "There are many who bear the wand, but few who become Bacchoi." **Becoming one with the godman was the goal of the Mysteries.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is this like what Paul taught about being "in Christ"? Yes; completely!

**The ancient philosophers were not so foolish as to believe that the Mystery myths were literally true, but wise enough to recognize that they were an easy introduction to the profound mystical philosophy at the heart of the Mysteries.**

It was the role of the priests and philosophers of the Mysteries to decode the hidden depths of spiritual meaning contained within the Mystery myths. Heliodorus, a priest of the Mysteries, explains:

*Philosophers and theologians do not disclose the meanings embedded in these stories to laymen but simply give them preliminary instruction in the form of a myth. But those who have reached the higher grades of the Mysteries they initiate into clear knowledge in the privacy of the holy shrine, in the light cast by the blazing torch of truth* (Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story*, 9.9, quoted in Fidler, op. cit., 322, note 46).

The Mysteries were divided into various levels of initiation, which led an initiate step by step through ever deepening levels of understanding. The number of levels of initiation varied in different Mystery traditions, but essentially **the initiate was led from the Outer Mysteries, in which the myths were understood superficially as religious stories, to the Inner Mysteries, in which the myths were revealed as spiritual allegories.** First the initiate was ritually purified. Then they were taught the secret teachings on a one-to-one basis (P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 1995, p. 367). A beginner was called a *mystae*, which means "eyes closed" and is the root of our words "mystery" and "mysticism." The *mystae* were those who had not yet understood the secret Inner Mysteries. The higher level of initiates were called *epoptae*, meaning "to have seen." The *epoptae* were those who had understood the Inner Mysteries (C. Kerényi, *Dionysus*, 1976, Preface, xxiv). Despite this abundance of physical evidence for the popularity of the Dionysus cult, Kerényi reiterates Nietzsche's lament that "Even today virtually everything in the field of the Dionysian still remains to be discovered." The highest stage was when the initiate understood the true meaning of the teachings and finally experienced what Theon of Smyrna calls "friendship and interior communion with God."

**Answer for yourself:** Is there any connection between these Higher Pagan Mysteries and Christ Jesus of the New Testament?

## OSIRIS-DIONYSUS & CHRIST JESUS & CONNECTION TO Gnostic CHRISTIANITY

Osiris-Dionysus had such universal appeal because he was seen as an Every-man figure who **symbolically represented each initiate. Through understanding the allegorical myth of the Mystery godman, initiates could become aware that, like Osiris-Dionysus, they were also "God made flesh." They too were immortal Spirit trapped within a physical body. This is their "Gnosis".**

- Through sharing in the death of Osiris-Dionysus initiates symbolically "died" to their lower earthly nature (their flesh).
- Through sharing in his resurrection they were spiritually reborn and experienced their eternal and divine essence. They came to realize that they were spiritual creatures and that the God of the Universe lived within them. This was their symbolic resurrection to their new awareness of their very self... "Christ in you".

This was the profound mystical teaching that the myth of Osiris-Dionysus encoded for those initiated into the Inner Mysteries, the truth of which initiates directly experienced for themselves. So through the medium of myth these great dynamic truths were imparted to lay people. You can equate this with the later Judeo-Christian concept of "being born again."

Writing of the Egyptian Mystery godman Osiris, Sir Wallis Budge, who was keeper of antiquities in the British Museum, explains:

*The Egyptians of every period in which they are known to us believed that Osiris was of divine origin, that he suffered death and mutilation at the hands of the power of evil, that after great struggle with these powers he rose again, that he became henceforth the king of the underworld and judge of the dead, and that because he had conquered death the righteous might also conquer death* (E.A.Wallis Budge, Egyptian Religion, 1899, p.59).

He represented to men the idea of a man who was both God and man, and he typified to the Egyptians in all ages the being who by reason of his sufferings and death as a man could sympathize with them in their own sickness and death. The idea of his human personality also satisfied their cravings and yearnings for communion with a being who, though he was partly divine, yet had much in common with themselves. Originally they looked upon Osiris as a man who lived on the earth as they lived, who ate and drank, who suffered a cruel death, who by help of certain gods triumphed over death, and attained unto everlasting life. But what Osiris did they could also do (Ibid.).

These are the key motifs that characterize the myths of all the Mystery god-men. What Budge writes of Osiris could equally be said of Dionysus, Attis, Adonis, Mithras, and the rest. It also describes the Jewish dying and resurrecting godman Jesus Christ. Like Osiris-Dionysus, he is also God Incarnate and God of the Resurrection. He also promises his followers spiritual rebirth through sharing in his divine Passion.

This might seem foreign and unrelated but it is not. The more that I read and studied the origins of the New Testament the more I was led into the study of Gnosticism since it was Gnostics which gave us the First New Testament (Marcion) the more I came to understand and see the parallels between the various versions of the myth of Osiris-Dionysus. Soon I was knee-deep in the study of Comparative Religions as I was seeing these same religions doctrines and motifs all throughout recorded history. The Osiris-Dionysus myth as been replayed over and over. Armed with this knowledge the the more it became obvious that the story of Jesus had all the characteristics of this perennial tale of Osiris-Dionysus and its variations. Event by event, I found that I was able to build Jesus' supposed biography from mythic motifs previously relating to Osiris Dionysus:

- **Osiris-Dionysus is God made flesh, the savior and "Son of God"**
- **His father is God and his mother is a mortal virgin.**
- **He is born in a cave or humble cowshed on December 25 before three shepherds.**
- **He offers his followers the chance to be born again through the rites of baptism.**
- **He miraculously turns water into wine at a marriage ceremony.**
- **He rides triumphantly into town on a donkey while people wave palm leaves to honor him.**
- **He dies at Eastertime as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.**
- **After his death he descends to hell, then on the third day he rises from the dead and ascends to heaven in glory.**
- **His followers await his return as the judge during the Last Days.**
- **His death and resurrection are celebrated by a ritual meal of bread and wine, which symbolize his body and blood.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are these the only parallels between the Christ Jesus of the New Testament and the Pagan Godman? No by any means. There are hundreds. Are they to be understood "literally" or "allegorically"?



In the beginning of these studies not only was I depressed by what I was finding but one might say devastated spiritually. I had spent my whole life worshiping the Christian God who was little more than a replay of the Pagan Godman. What I lacked then in knowledge that would have comforted me immensely is the fact that these Pagan godman were understood by the devotees as "spiritual allegories" that expressed Divine Truths captured for all eternity in the form of myth. Oh how I wish I had had that understanding way back then. Lacking this perspective back then most of whom I was reading in the beginning of such study presented these Pagan godmen in a "literal" way never alluding to the fact that the devotees looked at them not from the perspective of the "Outer Mysteries" but through the "Inner Mysteries." Once seeing this then I was better able to reevaluate the Christ Jesus of the New Testament in the same way and the parallels which once had meant "idolatry" now was seen anew in the same light.

**Answer for yourself:** Why are these remarkable similarities not common knowledge? Because, as we were to discover later, the early Roman Church did everything in its power to prevent us perceiving them. It systematically destroyed Pagan sacred literature in a brutal program of eradicating the Mysteries - a task it performed so completely that today Paganism is regarded as a "dead" religion.

Surprising to me with further study was the fact that writers of the first few centuries CE saw these similarities between the new Christian religion and the ancient Mysteries. They were extremely obvious to them back then. We have lost a lot today again due to the censorship of Roman Catholicism. Pagan critics of Christianity, such as the satirist Celsus, complained that this recent religion was nothing more than a pale reflection of their own ancient teachings. Early "Church fathers," such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Irenaeus, were understandably disturbed and resorted to the desperate claim that these similarities were the result of Satanic plagiarism and mimicry. Using one of the most absurd arguments ever advanced, they accused the Devil of "plagiarism by anticipation," of deviously copying the true story of Jesus before it had actually happened in an attempt to mislead the gullible! These Church fathers struck us as no less devious than the Devil they hoped to incriminate.

Other Christian commentators have claimed that the myths of the Mysteries were like "pre-echoes" of the literal coming of Jesus, somewhat like premonitions or prophecies. This is a more generous version of the diabolical mimicry theory, but seemed no less ridiculous than the Satanic plagiarism theory. There was nothing other than cultural prejudice, ingrained religious conditioning since childhood, and lack of knowledge that prevents us from seeing the Jesus story as the literal culmination of its many mythological precursors. Viewed impartially, it appeared to be just another version of the same basic story.

As early Christianity became the dominant power in the previously Pagan world, popular motifs from Pagan mythology became grafted onto the biography of Jesus. This is a possibility that is even put forward by many Christian theologians. The virgin birth, for example, is often regarded as an extraneous later addition that should not be understood literally. Such motifs were "borrowed" from Paganism in the same way that Pagan festivals were adopted as Christian saints' days. This theory is common among those who go looking for the "real" Jesus hidden under the weight of accumulated mythological debris. This is only part of the answer we are looking for.

Having collected and collated such a comprehensive body of similarities between the Christ Jesus of the New Testament and the Pagan Mysteries there remained hardly any significant elements in the biography of Jesus that I did not find prefigured by the Mysteries. On top of this, the more I studied I discovered that even Jesus' teachings were not original, but had been anticipated by the Pagan sages! Many great sayings of Jesus in the New Testament were previously espoused by Pagan philosophers and philosophic movements.

**Answer for yourself:** How could this be?

**Answer for yourself:** Was there a "real" Jesus somewhere underneath all this?

Just when I thought I was finding the end of the road in my Jesus studies I was to be re oriented ever further the more that I examined Gnosticism and went beyond the surface of this complex religious system of thought.

## THE GNOSTICS...& THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

Needless to day at times my head was swimming at not only what I was learning but the speed at which it was coming. At times I would have to take a sabbatical and sort out and departmentalize what I was uncovering. It was at these times that I began to seriously question the received picture of the early Church and have a look at the evidence for myself. This led to my serious investigation of the New Testament and how it was produced: who, when, additions, changes, deletions, inventions, and its canonization. Along the way I discovered four major pieces of information that would shape my further studies:

- That instead of "one" New Testament there really was two: the First New Testament of the Gnostic Marcion in 140 C.E. and the refutation of it in 180 C.E. by Irenaeus which I call the "Second New Testament"
- That far from being the united congregation of saints and martyrs that traditional history would have us believe, the early Christian community was actually made up of a whole spectrum of different religious sects and groups.
- These can be broadly categorized into two different schools.
  - On the one hand there were those we will call Literalists, because what defines them is that they take the Jesus story as a literal account of historical events. It was this school of Christianity that was adopted by the Roman Empire in the fourth century CE, becoming Roman Catholicism and all its subsequent offshoots.
  - On the other hand, however, there were also radically different Christians known as Gnostics. These are called Allegorists.
  - Conventionally these two camps are known respectively as orthodox or catholic Christians (LITERALISTS) and Gnostics (ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION).

These forgotten Gnostic Christians were later persecuted out of existence by the Literalist Roman Church with such thoroughness that until recently we knew little about them except through the writings of their detractors. We are so fortunate today to be blessed by the discoveries made by archeologists in the last 150 years; in particular in the last 50 or so years with the finds of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Only a handful of original Gnostic texts survive the ravages of Rome and Father Time, none of which were published before the nineteenth century. This situation changed dramatically, however, with a remarkable discovery in 1945 when an Arab peasant stumbled upon a whole library of Gnostic gospels hidden in a cave near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. This gave scholars access to many texts which were in wide circulation among early Christians, but which were deliberately excluded from the canon of the New Testament. Discovered were gospels attributed to Thomas and Philip, texts recording the acts of Peter and the 12 disciples, apocalypses attributed to Paul and James, and so on (Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, p. 1-14).

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not seem strange to you that a whole library of early Christian documents could be discovered, containing what seems to be the teachings of Christ and his disciples, and yet so few modern followers of Jesus should even know of their existence? How could they have been overlooked for 2000 years? Would not Rome had collected them as they did so much other materials down through history?

**Answer for yourself:** Have you read them yet?

**Answer for yourself:** What kept them from being included in the Roman Catholic Second New Testament and its later official canonization of the New Testament?

It seems that even though 2,000 years have passed since the Gnostics were purged, during which time the



**Roman Church has split into Protestantism and thousands of other alternative groups, the Gnostics are still not regarded as a legitimate voice of Christianity.**

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that it is these Gnostics who were the "real" early Jewish Christians and that Rome never wanted this fact known? Could it be that these Gnostic Gospels represent more accurate the earliest beliefs of the original Christians concerning "the Christ"?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that the Christ Jesus of the First New Testament was understood only "allegorically" and this knowledge was destroyed by Rome's purge of the Gnostics as well as their later refutation of the Gnostic's First New Testament whereby Rome created their own "literal" Second New Testament which continued in place of an "allegorical Christ" a "human Christ"?

**Those who do explore the Gnostic gospels and Gnosticism discover a form of Christianity quite alien to the religion with which they are familiar that we inherited from Rome.** To Literalists Roman Catholics, the Gnostics were dangerous heretics. The Church as left us volumes of anti-Gnostic works.

**Answer for yourself:** What should this teach us? It is an unintentional testimony to the power and influence of Gnosticism within early Christianity. Roman Catholicism during the early centuries painted Gnostics as Christians who had "lost their way". They claimed they had become contaminated by the Paganism that surrounded them and had abandoned the purity of the true faith. **The Gnostics, on the other hand, saw themselves as the authentic Christian tradition and the orthodox bishops as an "imitation church"** (E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 1979, p. 147). **They claimed to know the secret Inner Mysteries of Christianity, which the Literalists did not possess.**

As I continued to explore the beliefs and practices of the Gnostics I became convinced that the Literalists were right in some way. I discovered a religious tradition concerning God and His Christ that ran from earliest Egypt on down through history through succeeding nations where cherished Divine Concepts were captured for all eternity through myths that were never intended to be taken "Literally." The problem is that today we read these Pagan accounts "literally" and consider them nonsense. If however we approach them with the intended "allegorical" interpretation as was intended then they open before us as beautiful treasures expressing the intricacies of God and His Creation. Of course this will take time and much study as one prepares himself to competently handle this religious literature but the rewards are worth the sacrifice and price to do so. Having said this over time I realized that the **earliest Christian Gnostics were little different from Pagans in that they held the secrets of God and His Creation in their myths as did the Ancients.** It cannot be overstressed that the problem is that we approach this religious literature with "literal" eyeglasses and are blinded to the Divine Cosmic Truths that they conceal.

**Gnostics** means "Knowers," a name they acquired because, like the initiates of the Pagan Mysteries, they believed that their secret teachings had the power to **impart Gnosis** - direct experiential "Knowledge of God". **Just as the goal of a Pagan initiate was to become one with God, so for the Gnostics the goal of the Christian initiate was to become one with "the Christ" of God.**

**What particularly struck me over time and in my studies is the fact that neither Paul nor the the Gnostics were concerned with the historical Jesus.** Gnostics viewed the Jesus story in the same way that the Pagan philosophers viewed the myths of Osiris-Dionysus...as an "allegory" expressing higher spiritual knowledge and truths. **We know today that these earliest Gnostic Christians regarded the story of Christ Jesus as an allegory taken from the Book of Exodus that encoded secret mystical teachings about Creation and life.**

**Answer for yourself:** Could this explain the similarities between Pagan myths and the biography of Jesus that I had discovered and had been bothered by the whole time? Should I have looked at Christ Jesus as did the earliest Christians in an "allegorical" fashion instead of a "literal" fashion"?

**Answer for yourself:** Could this explain the lack of credible historical evidence for the historical Jesus outside of

that one book called the New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Have we been so caught up with traditional ways of thinking that we had been unable to see it?

## DO WE EVEN DARE TO THINK OF THE POSSIBILITY OF WHAT ALL THIS MEANS?

The traditional version of history bequeathed to us by the authorities of the Roman Church is that Christianity developed from the teachings of a Jewish Messiah and that Gnosticism was a later deviation. It was not. Gnosticism came long before Roman literalism and Roman Christianity.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this Roman version of recorded history accurate to the facts that can be discerned today? No.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just possible that true authentic Christianity is not Roman Christianity but a form of Gnosticism?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that orthodox "literalist" Roman Christianity was a later deviation from Gnosticism and that Gnosticism was a synthesis of Judaism and the Pagan Mystery religions and in so being expressed more accurately the earliest religious beliefs of the church concerning "the Christ" and "Jesus"?

More study was to follow but the picture was coming together with each new puzzle piece. Being aware that most ancient Mediterranean cultures had adopted the ancient Mysteries then it was not a problem in seeing how each culture adapted these Pagan Mysteries to their own national tastes and created their own version of the myth of the dying and resurrecting godman.

**Answer for yourself:** Had some of the Jews done the same? Had some Jews adopted the Pagan Mysteries and created their own version of the Pagan Mysteries, which we now today know as Gnosticism?

**Answer for yourself:** Had groups of Jews and initiates of the Jewish Mysteries adapted the potent symbolism of the Osiris-Dionysus myths (dying and resurrecting godman) into a myth of their own, the hero of which was the Jewish dying and resurrecting godman Jesus?

**Answer for yourself:** If this was so, then should we look at the Jesus story not as a biography at all but a consciously crafted vehicle for encoded spiritual teachings created by Jewish Gnostics?

**As in the Pagan Mysteries, initiation into the Inner Mysteries would reveal the myth's allegorical meaning. Those uninitiated into the Inner Mysteries had mistakenly come to regard the Jesus myth as historical fact and in this way Literalist Christianity had been created. Gnostics understood that one begins his spiritual journey with the Outer Mysteries and understood that in the beginning spiritual myths are perceived "literally" by the carnal believers but with spiritual maturity they grown to see the hidden Divine Concepts in the "allegorical" understanding of the spiritual myth!**

**Answer for yourself:** Do the Inner Mysteries of Christianity, which the Gnostics taught but which the later Roman Literalists denied existed, reveal that the Jesus story was not a factual account of God's one and only visit to planet Earth, but a mystical teaching story designed to help each one of us become one with Christ?+

**Answer for yourself:** The Jesus story does have all the hallmarks of a myth, so could it be that that is exactly what it is?

After all, no one has read the newly discovered Gnostic gospels and taken their fantastic stories as literally true; they are readily seen as myths. **It is only familiarity, cultural prejudice, and a lack of knowledge on our**



## **parts that prevent us from seeing the New Testament gospels in the same light.**

**Answer for yourself:** If those gospels had also been lost to us and only recently discovered, who would read these tales for the first time and believe they were historical accounts of a man born of a virgin, who had walked on water and returned from the dead?

**Answer for yourself:** Why should we consider the stories of Osiris, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and the other Pagan Mystery saviors as fables, yet come across essentially the same story told in a Jewish context and believe it to be the biography of a carpenter from Bethlehem?

I had been raised a Christian and a Seminary graduate and now an ordained Pastor. My studies had not only surprised me but shocked me. Despite years of open-minded spiritual exploration I still felt that it was somehow dangerous to even dare think such thoughts. Early indoctrination reaches very deep. **The conclusions of my study and the evidence that I will present on this website will show you beyond any doubt that the Christ Jesus of the New Testament is a pattern for a Pagan god and that today's Christianity, unlike the earliest Gnostic Christians, is a heretical product of Paganism religions which were interpreted by Rome "literally" instead of "allegorically." The earliest Gnostic Christians did not believe in a "literal human Christ." This will be proven in this website by many infallible proofs.**

This simple "key" explains the similarities between the stories of Osiris-Dionysus and Jesus Christ in a simple and elegant way. They are parts of one developing mythos.

**Answer for yourself:** Isn't there "indisputable historical evidence" outside of the New Testament for the existence of Jesus the man? No there is not.

**Answer for yourself:** And how could Gnosticism be the original Christianity when St. Paul, the earliest Christian we know about, is so vociferously anti-Gnostic? Or was he and only made to look at way by later Roman forgery of epistles in Paul's name when Rome replaced the Gnostic First New Testament with a literal version of their own in 180 C.E. (the Second New Testament)?

**Answer for yourself:** And is it really credible that such an insular and anti-Pagan people as the Jews could have adopted the Pagan Mysteries?

**Answer for yourself:** How could it have happened that a consciously created myth came to be believed as history?

**Answer for yourself:** If Gnosticism represents genuine Christianity, why was it Literalist Christianity that came to dominate the world as the most influential religion of all time?

## **THE GREAT COVER-UP**

Don't be afraid of challenging the accepted Roman view of history. Winners write history and Rome won. That does not mean that they were right; only stronger. As I continued to study and looked farther back into recorded history the traditional picture of received Christianity began to unravel completely all around me. I found:

- **Schism after schism**
- **Power struggles after power struggle by competing religious sects**
- **Forged documents and**
- **False identities of writers of later gospels and epistles**
- **Religious documents and letters that had been edited, added to, subtracted from and invented**
- **Wholesale destruction of historical evidences**
- **Burning of libraries and destruction of opponents records and writings**

## The murder of opponents in the millions

I found myself in the greatest detective story in the whole wide world. I had stumbled onto an ancient and unacknowledged miscarriage of justice. For, time and again, as I critically examined what genuine evidence remained, we found that the history of Christianity bequeathed to us by the Roman Church was a gross distortion of the truth. It was becoming increasingly obvious to me that we as Christians and followers of the Jesus of the New Testament had been deliberately deceived, that the Gnostics were indeed the original Christians, and that their mystical understanding of God and His Christ had been purposely altered and changed by an authoritarian Roman institution which had created from it a dogmatic religion which then undertook a brutally enforced cover-up; possibly the greatest and biggest cover-up in the history of mankind. This was accomplished in part by the total forgery of the Second New Testament whereby a "literal" interpretation of "the Christ" was superimposed over an earlier "allegorical" interpretation of "the Christ" by the earliest Christians.

We need to talk of Eusebius for a second. Eusebius, at the beginning of the fourth century, compiled from legends, fabrications, and his own imagination the only early history of Christianity that still exists today. All subsequent histories have been forced to base themselves on Eusebius' dubious claims, because there has been little other information to draw on. All those with a different perspective on Christianity were branded as heretics and eradicated. In this way falsehoods compiled in the fourth century have come down to us as established facts. (T. Freke and P. Gandy, *The Jesus Mysteries*, 1999, p. 10-12). Eusebius was employed by the Roman Emperor Constantine, who made Christianity the state religion of the Empire and gave Literalist Christianity the power it needed to begin the final eradication of Paganism and Gnosticism. Constantine wanted "one God, one religion" to consolidate his claim of "one Empire, one Emperor" He oversaw the creation of the Nicene creed which is the article of faith repeated in churches to this day. Christians who refused to assent to this creed were banished from the Empire or otherwise silenced. This "Christian" Emperor then returned home from Nicaea and had his wife suffocated and his son murdered. He deliberately remained unbaptized until his deathbed so that he could continue his atrocities and still receive forgiveness of sins and a guaranteed place in heaven by being baptized at the last moment. Although he had his "spin doctor" Eusebius compose a suitably obsequious biography for him, he was actually a monster-just like so many Roman Emperors before him (T. Freke and P. Gandy, *The Jesus Mysteries*, 1999, p. 10-12).

**Answer for yourself:** Is it really at all surprising that a "history" of the origins of Christianity created by an employee in the service of a Roman tyrant should turn out to be a pack of lies?

Elaine Pagels, one of the foremost academic authorities on early Christianity, writes:

*It is the winners who write history-their way. No wonder, then, that the traditional accounts of the origins of Christianity first defined the terms (naming themselves "orthodox" and their opponents "heretics"); then they proceeded to demonstrate-at least to their own satisfaction-that their triumph was historically inevitable, or, in religious terms, "guided by the Holy Spirit" But the discoveries [of the Gnostic gospels] at Nag Hammadi reopen fundamental questions (E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 1979, p. 147).*

History is indeed written by the winners of wars; both military and theological. Rome won. The creation of an appropriate history has always been part of the arsenal of political manipulation. The Roman Church created a history of the triumph of Literalist Christianity. History is not simply related, it is created. Ideally, the motivation is to explain historical evidence and come to an accurate understanding of how the present has been created by the past. All too often, however, as Rome will show us, it is simply to glorify and justify the status quo. Such histories conceal as much as they reveal.

To dare to question a received history is not easy. Many of my friends when I bounced off them what I was



studying and learning from my studies over the years often reacted with fear. It is difficult to believe that something that you have been told is true from childhood could actually be a product of falsification and fantasy. The hard facts is that Rome and the early Church Fathers like Ignatius, Justin and Irenaeus have lied to us and completely fabricated historical events as well as representing their theological opponents with a pack of lies.

It is easy to believe that something *must* be true because everyone else believes it. But the truth often only comes to light by daring to question the unquestionable, by doubting notions which are so commonly believed that they are taken for granted. Bet Emet Ministries (Hebrew for House of Truth) is the product of such an openness of mind. When I first encountered many of these truths from my study it seemed absurd and impossible. Now it seems obvious and ordinary; especially in light of over 15 years of constant scholarly study. The Vatican was constructed upon the site of an ancient Pagan sanctuary because the new is always built upon the old. **In the same way Christianity itself has as its foundations the Pagan spirituality that preceded it (we just don't know it because we are told that this "literalist" interpretation is unique when in fact it is a gross aberration of the intended "allegorical" precepts that long predated it!**

## **CAN WE RECOVER THE MYSTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS "CHRIST" AS HELD BY THE EARLIEST Gnostic CHRISTIANS?**

Yes! In the presentation of this knowledge it is not my intention to upset certain Christians by trying to tell them that they are wrong. I will let the facts and evidences that I present speak for me. As a Pastor who has come to a greater understanding of "truth" through years of scholarly study it has been hard to be constantly surrounded by religious untruths and lies without experiencing a certain amount of outrage at what Rome has done in clouding these truths about the earliest Christians and how we have been misled from the truth about God. Along with this is the terrible negative misrepresentation of the Gnostics by the early Roman writers. This is only made worse as one becomes aware of the great riches of Pagan culture without feeling grief that they were so wantonly destroyed in the many Roman purges of truth down through history.

Above we began this article by sharing how the Pagan Mysteries were clearly an extremely powerful force in the ancient world and that the Pagan Mysteries inspired the greatest minds of the ancient world. We have documented how these Pagan Mysteries were practiced in different forms by nearly every culture in the Mediterranean. **They comprised Outer Mysteries, which were open to all and to which a "literal" understanding was applied as well as the secret Inner Mysteries known only to those who had undergone a powerful process of mystical initiation and which these religious truths were then understood "allegorically." The truth of the Mysteries lay in the "allegorical" understanding and not in the "literal" understanding.** At the heart of the Mysteries was the myth of a dying and resurrecting godman-Osiris-Dionysus. **The Inner Mysteries revealed the myths of Osiris-Dionysus to be spiritual allegories encoding spiritual teachings of one identifying with the myth of the dying-resurrecting Godman whereby the initiate became aware of the Spiritual Christ within instead of just living a "fleshly" existence.** This was "the Gnosis" which saves from sin.

Unlike the various Pagan Mystery godmen, Jesus is traditionally viewed as a historical rather than a mythical figure, literally a man who was an incarnation of God, who suffered a cruel death, and resurrected to bring salvation to all humankind. But we saw that these elements of the Jesus story are only mythical stories inherited from the Pagan Mysteries which Rome will reinterpret "literally" and feed the world in their Second New Testament. Let us not forget that this Second New Testament is the one which replaced Marcion's Gnostic New Testament where "the Christ" was understood "allegorically".

Early Literalist Christians mistakenly believed that the Jesus story was different from other stories of Osiris-Dionysus because Jesus alone had been a historical rather than a mythical figure. This sadly cannot be proven

upon serious scrutiny of the facts and evidences made available to us today. Christians will resort to forgery of existing religious writings in order to create a "historical Jesus". This "literalist" interpretation of "the Christ" has left Christians feeling that their faith is in opposition to all others in that it is unlike all the rest because it lies not in the realm of "allegory" but in the realm of "historical reality." As stated this cannot be proven; in fact just the opposite it the case. It is my hope that by understanding Christianity's true origins that we might see the link between all religions in their hunger and search for God through His Christ, Sophia, Logos, etc. Belief in the Jesus story was originally the first step in Christian spirituality - the Outer Mysteries. Its significance was to be explained by an enlightened teacher when the seeker was spiritually ripe. These Inner Mysteries imparted a mystical Knowledge of God beyond mere belief in dogmas. As a culture in America we have inherited only the Outer Mysteries of Christianity. We have lost the inner and true meaning of Paul's Christ. Our hope is that these teaching articles can help in recovering the truth concerning the true mystical Christian inheritance, God's Christ and God's true message of salvation.





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## SO WHO WAS THIS JESUS TO THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS?

It has been the established position of Orthodox Christianity for over some 1,700 to 1,800 years that we are to believe that the "Christos" is limited and isolated to just one historical person who lived in the first century in Israel and that this person alone is "the Christ" or "the Messiah". Judaism of course has denied this for the same period of time if not longer. Somebody is right and somebody is wrong here. Study is necessary to find the truth concerning this "Jesus of Nazareth" after being 2,000 years removed from the said events.

**Answer for yourself:** And who is this person of note that Christianity teaches as "the Christ"? Well that was easy. If you are a Christian your first answer would be "Jesus of Nazareth"; otherwise known as Yeshua in Aramaic-Hebrew. Orthodox forms of Christianity would have us believe that this "Christos" is isolated to just the person of Yeshua (Aramaic for "Jesus") of whom they preach and teach and substantiate such a belief upon from the received tradition as testified and maintained by the book given the world by Rome and which is called today the New Testament.

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware before you studied the true historical evidences which we have shown and which archeology has given the world in these last two hundred years that an earlier "Christianity" than the later Roman Christianity called "Gnostic Chrestianity" holds a very different view of this "Yeshua" and this "Christos"? Today we need to understand that these two terms "Christianity" and "Chrestianity" are mixed and the earlier one almost if not totally forgotten by most. So in this article I will use these terms interchangeably.

**Answer for yourself:** And what was believed about this first "Yeshua" and "Christos" before the emergence of the mighty Roman Empire and the writing of the New Testament under their oversight which was canonized in 398 A.D. and which depicts Rome's interpretation of "the Christos"?

We know for certain today that these earliest "Christians" first of all were not called "Christians" but rather "Chrestians"; "Chrestus" being the name not for some supposed historical person but rather for the "indwelling Christ of God" which was understood since the beginning of time to dwell and tabernacle within each man and woman created by God. These Gnostic Christians viewed this "Christos", this "Jesus", this "Yeshua" as the "perfect man" and model for all mankind; sort of a "completed man" and this Christos was viewed as a Light-Presence of God among mankind. In short, this Christ was the goal to be obtained by all mankind. Thus, to Christian Gnostics long before the rise and emergence of Orthodox Roman Christianity this "Yeshua" was God's vehicle for light and illumination of the whole mankind. Unknown to most is that every nation had their "Karst" or "Christ" and the similarities are uncanny when you do these studies. There was in reality "one Christ" as the example for all men and nations and "His Story" was told throughout the history or mankind under different names and identities and in nation after nation. In reality this "Christos" was understood as a "bridge" between the Invisible Realm of God and the visible plane of man's existence. This Christos was God's illuminator of mankind and was the gift given to each of mankind buried deep within his "flesh" and it was man's responsibility to awaken the Christ within.

***Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** And why was this necessary? The next verses say it all.

***Eph 5:15-17 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** Why is the word "walk" so important in verse 15 above?

**Thayers' Greek Lexicon** says it best:

**4043 peripateo-** to walk:

- a) to make one's way, progress; to make due use of opportunities
- b) Hebrew for, to live
  - 1) to regulate one's life
  - 2) to conduct oneself
  - 3) to pass one's life

Only when the Christ awakens in mankind can man know the will of God and the purpose of his Soul in his fleshly existence.

Rather than something isolate or exclusive to just one human being or some supposed "historical Yeshua", the Christos is considered to be embodied by all mankind, all men and women and collectively these aware of the indwelling Christos are truly the "body of Christ" around the central concept of the indwelling Christ, this Christ acting as a Center of a Light-Transmission or Christ Revelation of the Divine which is asleep within mankind. Essentially, according to masters of Gnostic Christian Tradition, the Light-Presence of the Messiah is not embodied by a single individual alone but by a matrix of individuals and, ultimately, is to be embodied by humanity as a whole--giving birth to a New and Divine Humanity. This is the goal of mankind and purpose of our existence.

From the Gnostic perspective, this "Christos" or this "Yeshua" is comparable to the "image" of our Future Self, our True and Divine Self, and belief in the Incarnation of the Christos in each man and woman (just like in the Jesus Story) was not originally believed limited to just one child in some manger but the belief in the divinity of man was understood on a much deeper level by those possessing such Spiritual Insight to be that all men and women created by God have within them the potential in their lives to live as "living sacrifices" unto God whereby their lives are manifestations of God's salvation both in body and Spirit. In this way they became living examples of God as the "life giver", of God's salvation; they became examples of this "Yeshua" to a suffering and needy world. Such was the understanding of the "indwelling Christ" in these earliest Gnostic Christians and history teaches us that this has been the belief of mankind since Ancient Egypt for they have their "Karsts" as well but we don't recognize them today since they go by the names of Horus and Osiris. Other nations will follow Egypt's example. Every nation has taught this indwelling "Karst" to those with "eyes to see and ears to hear". But sadly not all want to hear this message because of the awesome responsibility morally and ethically that it brings to the hearers. Rome will be a perfect example in the earliest centuries.

But these Gnostics taught such a belief in the Divine Potential within each and every human being. We see it so clearly in the teachings of the Gnostic Paul which never once mentions a supposed historical Jesus or even the life and teachings of such a supposed sage. Paul's "Karast" was the "Christ" within all men as it had always been taught before the rise of Rome and their historical Jesus and their book of fiction which describes supposedly a life of Christ limited and confined to only one person. Listen well to what this Gnostic Paul wrote in this authentic epistles and not the later forged ones by Rome:



*Gal 4:19 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (KJV)*

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

Thus, to believe that Yeshua is the Incarnation of Christ is to believe that the Christos is incarnated in yourself and that within you dwells the True Nature of God in your Soul and Self, and that one is destined to evolve toward Christhood. This "Jesus Story" is not the story of another; it is to be our story, our example, our paradigm. The New Testament teaches that this is the goal but sadly purposeful and unenlightened translation of the Greek New Testament has hidden this from us. We all grew up hearing preached from our pulpits "Christ is the end of the Law".

**Answer for yourself:** But is he? Is Christ really the end of the Law?

*Rom 10:4 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (KJV)*

Thayers' Greek Lexicon is very insightful here as we look at the hidden meanings to the word translated "end" in our New Testaments.

5056 telos-

- 1) end
  - a) termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be (always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time)
  - b) the end
    - 1) the last in any succession or series
    - 2) eternal
  - c) that by which a thing is finished, its close, an issue
  - d) the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose
- 2) a toll, a custom (that is, indirect tax on goods)

The Greek word translated "end" and interpreted as "ceased" as in "the law ceasing for mankind" actually speaks of a "goal" to be achieved that is obtained by living like this Christ and obeying the Commandments and Law of God in our lives just like this Christ-example in this same New Testament. This is to be our example for our lives that we might live as this Christ and experience this Christ in our lives; the story is not about some Christ living exclusively apart from you. This is to be our story. The verse speaks of every person's responsibility to allow this indwelling Christ to grow inside themselves and this was done by obeying the Laws of God which alters a person, transforms a person, and defines and molds one's character and personality. The "goal" is becoming a "living Christ" and this is the "living sacrifice" which the Christ in Paul mentions in Romans. Arriving as this "Christlikeness" through a life of faith and repentance and obedience to God's Commandments "further forms and nourishes this Christ in us" and one's life is but a series of opportunities to develop and strengthen this Christ in us and this is our purpose and goal which finishes our Soul and its existence on this earthly plane. So rather than being "kaput" the word "end" actually means the goal to be sought after. Ironically we misunderstand this verse and miss the truth of it by 180 degrees in our Churches.

This "indwelling Christ" in each of us as taught by Gnostic Christianity is similar to Eastern Wisdom Traditions which teach a Path to Enlightenment, and in the Gnostic view the True Gospel is a Way to the Attainment of Christ Consciousness. I know this is an overworked term but it is the truth no matter how some distort it today. The idea of "salvation" in Christian Gnosticism is a state of Self-realization of the Divinity within you and its cultivation and maturation during your life by allowing God and His Torah develop you into "the Christ" you were destined to become. This the purpose of one's life and why we are here.

Understand that this "Christos" is known by many names. The name of Yeshua in Hebrew connotes this idea of Self-realization. It is the Name of Yahweh, which appears throughout the Old Testament, with the addition of one letter (the Hebrew letter Shin.) The Divine Name of Yahweh literally means, *"That Which Was, Is, and forever Shall Be"*, and the name Yeshua means, *"Yahweh delivers"* or *"Yahweh saves"*. Yahweh, or whatever name you call our Creator, represents the one Being-Consciousness-Force-Energy or Life-Power which is the Source of all, and Yeshua, or again whatever name you call God's mediator or "Karast or Christ", represents a conscious unification with the Source; hence a state of Truth-Consciousness (Christ Consciousness). No wonder the Gnostic Paul uses the term "in Christ" so often when speaking of this conscious unification with the Divine. In essence, the Blessed Name of Yeshua does not mean some supposed historical personage which by the way yet today has not one shred of unforged evidence that he ever existed but rather a lot that proves he did not, but rather means *"knowledge of truth that will set you free."* This truth is the awareness of one's Soul and Self inseparable from Yahweh.

**Answer for yourself:** But is our whole New Testament wrong? No, for as hopefully you learned from this website Irenaeus and others will take these Gnostic writings and "work them over" incorporating their Historical Jesus as the Christ in their response to the Gnostic First New Testament along with "you get away with it theology by easy 'believeism'". Yet, glimpses of this truth of which I speak are scattered throughout this New Testament and are certainly to be found in places in the gospels that appear in the Christian Bible, but it becomes more obvious in gospels that were not included in the Bible, such as the Gospel of St. Thomas, which was among the scrolls found at Nag Hammadi by an Arab peasant in 1945. As I tell all my students it takes time to obtain such a level of study whereby you spot these things but over time with such study then these things will begin to jump out at you and you begin to see the differences between the Gnostic Paul and Christ in the New Testament and Rome's later anti-Gnostic Paul and anti-Gnostic Christ. This gospel of Thomas is quite different than those that appear in the Bible. Instead of an interpretive story, the Gospel of St. Thomas is composed of wisdom sayings of God's Christ collected and handed down over the ages, the interpretation of which is left completely to the reader. Every successive nation has their "teachings of God's Christ"; they are only called by different names but the Wisdom of God is found in every nation; wisdom intended to allow mankind to reach his Spiritual Potential by allowing the Christ in them to be formed more and more in them every day. This Gospel of Thomas is a book meant to support an oral tradition and to encourage a spiritual quest for the direct experience of the Spirit of Truth. The first saying or verse of the gospel makes this perfectly clear.

*1. And he said, "Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death."*

Basically, it is a proclamation of the gospel as a record of *"secret sayings"* that were spoken in the presence of Didymos Judas Thomas by Christ-centered ones who in themselves were "living Yeshuas" and tells us that if we gain understanding of the sayings, we will be spiritually empowered and free from death, which is to say Self-realized. No one can really say whether St. Thomas actually wrote this gospel, but the dedication of the gospel to his name is significant, for Didymos literally means "a twin."

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that these "living Yeshuas" teaching this Ancient Wisdom and "secret sayings" were speaking to a disciple called Didymos Judas Thomas and then does this allude to the disciple as being like unto Yeshua or resembling him--hence the idea of the disciple as a Christ-bearer (twin) in the same way the Spirit of God in us all is the real Christ-bearer? What should this say to us?

Thus, the disciple to whom these sayings are spoken is one who knows the Indwelling Christ within himself, and it is implicit that one who reads and contemplates the Gospel of St. Thomas is to recognize Christ indwelling her or himself and to identify her or himself with that Light-Presence. Thus the goal of Christlikeness must begin with "knowing thyself".

The Gnostics considered "the Christ within" as not only as God's spiritual teacher, one who gives revelations, but also as an encourager for man to seek gnosis (Gnosis--"knowledge" of the true Self of man for himself). It is not sin, but ignorance that brings you into painful situations. The quest is to explore your own self, because



within the psyche is the potential for liberation or destruction. ***Man, know thyself.*** Even in our New Testament the "Jewish Christ" often points to the fact that the source of knowledge is in man himself. Looking for this knowledge, or gnosis, is a lonely, difficult process in which one encounters an inner resistance. This resistance against Gnosis is the desire to "sleep" or to stay "drunk". Aside from the teachings of this Jewish Christ depicted as a personified "Jesus" the student, by self-knowledge, can find those things that even this "Jesus" cannot teach him. In Gnostic texts thus we find basically two issues: to distance oneself from the world and its pleasures, and the inner experience of Christ. This has been the goal of mankind since the beginning of time in many nations as man knew from the beginning that the search for God and His Kingdom begins within himself.

***Luke 17:21 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** How can we describe the term "Gnosis"? According to Theodotus, 140-160 AD) Gnosis is ***"The knowledge of what we are, what we have been, the place from which we have come, the place into which we have fallen, the goal we are striving for and from which we have been pulled away, and the nature of our birth and of our rebirth."***

The Gnostics used the term Gnosis for "knowledge", "insight", because Gnosis implies an intuitive process of self-knowledge. To know oneself means to know the nature and destiny of man. "He who does not know himself, does not know anything, but he who knows himself, knows the depth of all things." (Book of Thomas the Athlete). Self-knowledge to the deepest level, is knowledge of the Divine.

Monoimus is recorded as saying: ***"Give up seeking for God, the creation and other such things. Seek him by taking yourself as point of origin. Learn who he is, inside you, attract everything to itself and says: "My God, my spirit, my thinking, my soul, my body". To attain gnosis is to learn the true source of divine power, this is the "depth" of all being. He who knows this source, gains self-knowledge, and discovers its origin. He has discovered his true Father and Mother.***

Saturninus of Antioch taught that men have a divine spark (the Christ within) which wants to return to the unknown God. Each has to seek the divine spark within—the spiritual being trapped within themselves. So, Gnostics were originally spiritual beings who had been made to live in bodies and souls through falling from the spiritual world above. Sparks or seeds of the Divine Being fell from the transcendent realm into the material universe, which is wholly evil, and were imprisoned in human bodies. Gnosis allows the Gnostic redemption and rebirth into the spiritual world in which they were first born. Reawakened by knowledge, the divine element in humanity can return to its proper home in the spiritual realm.

Lastly as an example that other nations who were not "Christians" knew of this "Christ within" I would like to mention The Delphic Oracle by Hart which states that the best known Delphic injunction was carved into the lintel at the Temple of Apollo: GNOTHI SEAUTON, ***Know Thyself.*** These words may have originated in Apollo's response to a question Chilon of Sparta asked: "What is best for man?" The reply, "Know thyself," is similar to the one believed to have been given to the Lydian king, Croesus, when he was told that he must know himself if he would live most happily. Croesus, a man of action and not philosophical, took this to mean that he should know his own strength, know what he wanted, and should rely on his own judgment. Others have found deeper meaning in these words, taking the "self" to mean the higher self, the true Self; to imply that as man is the microcosm of the macrocosm, he who knows himself knows all.

We find the same teachings of course in Judaism as well as the earliest "Chrestians" who taught only the "Yeshua within", "the Christ within" the very Self of man. Many spoke of these same teachings and were all "living Yeshuas" but this was never limited to just one person in some Palestine in the first century. Understand that teach as they may, and many did teach these Divine Spiritual Truths since the Ancient Egypt, that these sayings are really taught not by man but by the Indwelling Christ within the one that wrote them or spoke them. From the Christian Gnostic perspective, either way they are authentic teachings of the Christos. This



explains why in many religions we find similar if not exact teachings. There is only one Truth as the Ultimate Truth from God. Whether uttered by Christ indwelling man, woman, Israel, Greece, or Egypt, the Christ indwelling the disciple is the same Light-Presence that has revealed Itself since the beginning of time with the first man and woman created by our Ultimate Creator. In this light, the sayings in the Gospel of St. Thomas may be contemplated and meditated upon as sayings emerging from the Indwelling Christ within ourselves, as though a still, small voice is speaking them inwardly as we read and contemplate and meditate upon them. Study and contemplation of any Scripture in this way can lead to deep intuitive insights and can easily become an experience of contact with the Light-Presence within us. This is the purpose of the Gospel of St. Thomas, and from the Gnostic perspective, it is the purpose of any Wisdom Teaching or Scripture--a way to enter into the knowledge and communion of the Divine Presence and Power within ourselves and our lives.

It is interesting to note the many different gospels we have: the Gospel according to St. John, the Gospel according to St. Thomas, the Gospel according to St. Mark, and so on. If one studies them, they clearly do not tell the same story nor represent a static or fixed view of this personified "Jesus Christ" or Yeshua or the Christos. In fact, each gospel actually represents the knowledge and understanding of Christ in the experience of the person who wrote it. In this we gain a sense of Original Chrestianity (not Christianity) as it existed in the pre-Roman Orthodoxy of the earliest centuries and in so doing we don't get a jumbled jargon of fixed doctrines dogmas, creeds, rituals; rather it was a living spiritual experience rather than a religion. It suggests that every "Christian" had his or her own unique gospel, his or her own knowledge and understanding of the Truth and Light as it was revealed in his or her own experience of Christ. Every nation had its own Torah of sorts to guide man in the steps of this evolving Christ within as well we can trace the Laws and Commandments of Moses all the way back to Sumer with the real "Noah". It is these Laws again that train the Christ in us to reach the perfection of our Soul in our Earthly existence. In this sense we may say that Original Christianity was Gnostic, for gnosis is a Greek word meaning "knowledge," specifically knowledge and understanding acquired through direct spiritual or mystical experience, and a Gnostic is anyone who has acquired such spiritual knowledge to one degree or another. Essentially, according to the Christian Gnostic view, the True Gospel is one's own experience of the Truth and Light, which is *"the knowledge of truth that will set you free."* When the Christos is understood in this way, the fact that some people may use the name Buddha or Krishna or another name for the Light-Presence does not present a problem, for by "Christ" we mean the Spirit of Truth or Light-Presence in whatever form it might appear or has appeared to every man and woman since time began. Now this should help us understand correctly how the Ancient nations understood their "Christs" when we read the Ancient Wisdom accounts of their "Osiris, Horus, Dionysus, Attis, Mithras, Apollos, and other sun gods etc." Just like the Christian Jesus their "Christs", depicted as Osiris, Horus Dionysus, Attis, Mithras, Apollos, etc., were not literal flesh and blood human beings but only examples of the pinnacle of human spiritual evolution and Spiritual Maturation; they were likewise "the goal" for mankind as Christ is the "goal" of the Law and not the "kaput" as we saw above. Every human being is unique and individual, therefore every individual's experience of the Truth and Light will be unique to her or himself, as will the Holy Gospel she or he brings forth from within her or himself. In terms of Self-empowerment and Self-realization, the only question in the Gnostic view is whether or not the individual having a psychic or spiritual experience is able to recognize the Light-Presence (Indwelling Christ) within him or herself, because it is this inward recognition that opens the way to various degrees of Enlightenment and Liberation ("Salvation").

There you have it. You just discovered the "real Jesus" as it was taught before the rise of the Roman Empire. This "Jesus" as a Spiritual Concept goes back some 10,000 years for if you recall I showed the reader previously that we find this same name, "Jesus", as far back as the earliest records of Ancient Egypt some 10,000 B.C.E. This should get your attention and surely this cannot be a human Jesus. This, as I have detailed above, is the key to understanding the true Christ: the recognition and realization of the Light-Presence or Indwelling Christ within oneself and the bringing forth of that Light and Truth from within oneself. The message of Gnostic Christianity is that we are powerful spiritual beings, whether or not we are conscious of it. We are living embodiments of this Christ, of this God, and the only question is how we receive our empowerment and actualize the Light-Presence in us. This is where the Torah comes in as it is the blueprint for mankind and defines the Ultimate will of God which is God's love to us whereby He reveals Himself to us; what He is and does (the Positive Commandments) and what He is not and what He does not (the Negative Commandments). This makes all the sense to allow us to achieve our potential as individuals and the whole of



so who was this jesus to the earliest christians?

**mankind who is called to this end.**

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## BET EMET'S PILGRIMAGE: THE RECOVERY OF LOST TRUTHS

As I grew up in the Christian Church I took for granted that the New Testament was a gift of God and necessary for my salvation. I was taught that that the New Testament was a Divine Revelation from Heaven; inspired, infallible, and inerrant. I was also taught that it was an accurate representation of history and the historical Jesus and what both he and I were to believe. I was also reassured that the authors of these writings were the Jewish Apostles and followers of Jesus and the New Testament was the Old Testament "fulfilled." I was also taught that the Messianic prophecies in the New Testament not only were fulfilled by Jesus but was proof of his Messiahship. I was taught that the New Testament was the "Old Testament" fulfilled and was all that I needed to know for my salvation.

But that was when I was a child and when I had not studied anything surrounding the New Testament for myself. Now at 54 years old and a Seminary graduate and ex-Pastor I realize fully that none of the above statements from the previous paragraph are accurate. I want all the readers to know that I loved Seminary for it was there that I was given the tools to do such scholarly Bible study and unlike most graduates who go off and assume their Pastorates and leave serious post-graduate study behind that was not the road that was taken by me. Having encountered so many things that just did not add-up in Seminary I had to have the answers to these problematic questions that never would go away. Being told to "have faith" does not cut it when obvious discrepancies abound. God never told us to have "faith" in a lie or something that does not make sense. I wanted to know why my Christian theology taught at Seminary was full of holes like swiss cheese. Being told repeatedly that God is not the author of confusion then I had to know who was responsible for so many conflicting and competing various "theologies" that abound in the one document entitled the New Testament. I had to know why so much in the New Testament contradicted each other and why so many different and opposing theologies down through history were presented to the layman in the New Testament as a supposed Divine Unity. Within the New Testament we have surrounding "the Christ" a mixture of Mystery Religions, Sun Worship, Covenant theology, Dispensationalism, Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, Western Christianity, Monotheism, Trinitarianism, the Synoptic Jesus that differs from the Johannine Jesus, Paulinism, Judaism, etc.; and all this mind you emanating from the supposed mouth of Jesus and his followers. Something is wrong! I could not put my finger on "it" at the time of my graduation but years of serious and consistent study led me to the answers I sought. During the following years of my pastorate I embarked upon a life of serious scholarly study to arrive at the answers to my many questions which culminated in not only receiving the answers that I sought for these "theological problems" concerning the Jewish Roots of the Christian faith but the presentation of these answers to the many problematic questions through the publication of the facts and evidences discovered during my studies on various websites authored by Bet Emet Ministries [Hebrew for "House Of Truth". In other words I was able to see this Roman religious synthesis in the New Testament for what it truly is: a gross misrepresentation of "the Christ" idea as handed down from the ancients. Rome's New Testament was laid bare by unbiased and critical study that would not settle for anything other than the truth regarding the original Christians and what they believed about "the Christ" and how this idea related to Jesus before it will be later altered for all time by Western



**Roman Christianity.**



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# THE ORTHODOX CORRUPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

This website is devoted to the study of the New Testament, its texts, and their transmission, about the words of the **emerging New Testament and how they came to be changed by scribes of the early Christian centuries.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that there are two New Testaments; the first one collected in 140 C.E. that reflected the beliefs of the earliest Christians regarding "the Christ" and the Second New Testament, crafted over the next 3-4 centuries, which change these beliefs and which we have inherited today?

"No way" you say; but you better pay attention for it really has happened and the New Testament we have inherited today as Christians and followers of Jesus is nothing like the First New Testament of 140 C.E.; nor reflective of the earliest beliefs about "the Christ."

If you ever decide to look into and study this topic the facts and the evidence that you will uncover will hit you like a brick: **the New Testament that we have today is a far cry from what it once was; let alone reflective of the religious beliefs of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus.** Let me say it another way: **the Christianity of the second through the fifth centuries is different as night and day from the earliest Christianity of the first century.** If you do your own study or diligently work through this website you will find that **scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make them more distinctly orthodox and by so doing prevented their misuse by other sects of Christians who espoused aberrant views.**

We will see in the evidences that follow in this website that Christian scribes of the second through the fifth century modified the words of Scripture they inherited and how the words and religious beliefs and doctrines of the earliest First New Testament (140 C.E.), reflecting the earliest beliefs of the earliest Christians in the first and early second century, came to be altered in the course of their transcription. We will come to see the various theological debates of the second and third Christian centuries involving "**Christology**", a period of intense rivalry among various groups of Christians who advocated divergent ways of understanding their religion. **By the fourth century, one of these groups, Roman Catholicism, had routed the opposition, co-opting for itself the designation "orthodoxy" and effectively branding all rival beliefs as "heresies" and all other Christian sects as "heretics."** We will come to see how these proponents of fourth-century orthodoxy insisted on the antiquity of their views and embraced certain authors of the preceding generations as their own theological forebears. Our study will focus on these earlier Christians-the representatives of a **"earliest orthodoxy" of the earliest follower and disciples of "the Christ" and Jesus-because most scribal alterations of the New Testament text originated during the time of their disputes, that is, in the ante-Nicene age (before the council of Nicea in 325 C.E.).**

We will come to see how the **proto-Catholic orthodox Christians used religious literature which they themselves often changed, created, invented, and altered in their early struggles for dominance, as**



they produced argumentative treatises, forged supporting documents under the names of earlier authorities, collected apostolic works into an authoritative canon, and insisted on certain hermeneutical principles for the interpretation of these works. The documents of this new canon could be circulated, of course, only to the extent that they were copied. And they were copied by zealous scribes who were intimately familiar with the debates over "Christology" and other doctrines that made their scribal labors a necessity if this new flavor of Christianity, Roman Christianity, was to survive. A new religion was being created to replace the faith of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus. A New Bible was being written by these zealous scribes to replace the one used earlier by these earliest Christians. This new interpretation of Christianity and its "Christ" needed an authority to undergird this movement in Rome and this authority was found in their forgery of the First New Testament and the subsequent presentation of the later Second New Testament abounding with textual forgeries, additions, deletions, inventions, etc. It was within this milieu of controversy and fight for doctrinal supremacy that scribes sometimes changed their scriptural texts to make them "say" what the dominant Roman theology happened to be at that time. The New Testament becomes a group of very fluid texts; changing with the evolution of Roman Catholicism and its religious doctrines as hammered out at the successive Church Councils. Make so mistake about it; these scribes "corrupted" their texts for theological reasons. The sad fact is that we have as Christians today and those who attempt to be followers of Jesus and "the Christ" have inherited a New Testament that is not only a forgery and a tragic misrepresentation of the religious beliefs held by the earliest Christians concerning "the Christ" but have been led into idolatry because of it.

This website will scrutinize the alteration of the textual tradition of the New Testament specifically in the area of Christology. We will focus on different Christological "heresies" of the early centuries:

- **Adoptionism, the view that Christ was a man, but not God;**
- **Docetism, the view that he was God, but not a man; and**
- **Separationism, the view that the divine Christ and the human Jesus were distinct beings.**

It is time now that we begin our study into how the proto-orthodox scribes of the second and third centuries modified their inherited texts of Scripture to make them conform more closely with their own Christological beliefs, effecting thereby the "orthodox corruption of the First New Testament."



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# WHAT IS THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT? THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THEIR CONFLICTING LITERATURE?

**Answer for yourself:** What is the truth concerning the origin of the New Testament?

Well, the answer to the above question changes depending upon whom you ask and the amount of unbiased study undertaken by those whom you ask.

First let it be said that just because a Christian writes a book does not mean that he knows anything about Marcion and Marcionite Gnosticism and it's connection to Paul and many of his religious doctrines which go unrecognized as a form of Gnosticism today and which line the pages of our New Testaments as if it were a continuation of what Jesus supposedly believed. But if you are reading this article then I suspect that you have heard of Bet Emet Ministries and our uncompromising search for truth and diligent efforts at recovering the truth concerning the New Testament and Jesus. Being reared on "inspired, infallible, and inerrant" our whole lives most of us grew up never questioning the New Testament about anything; at least that was my experience until I entered Seminary and began to seriously look at these documents and their origin and conflicting theological positions. I used to wonder that if God is not the author of confusion then what are we doing with this conflicting New Testament? **I quickly understood that something was amiss and that there is a vast difference between what "denominations" espouse as the origin of the New Testament and what unbiased archeologists and historians have to say.** I quickly came to see that Christianity in the modern world is a richly diverse phenomenon and that my Baptist upbringing was only one of over 2000 different Christian denominations that exist today that again have little in common other than the name "Christian." **There is, to be sure, common ground among many Christian groups, but when you compare in detail the beliefs and practices of various Christian sects and denominations, let alone the earliest Christian documents that did not make it into our New Testament, then you may be more struck by the differences than the similarities.**

Understand my approach to this website and the articles presented for your study. I am interested, for example, in the life of the historical Jesus, in the history of the traditions that circulated about him, in the ways that the authors of the New Testament documents agreed and disagreed with one another, in the ways early Christians differed from their Jewish and pagan neighbors, in the rise of Gentile Christian anti-Judaism, and in the wide range of other questions that lie more in the province of the historian than in that of the theologian or literary critic.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this kind of diversity as seen in Christianity a modern development? Many people appear to think so. For them and other "uneducated" Christian believers Christianity was originally a solid unity, but with the passing of time since the Protestant Reformation this unity became fractured and fragmented.

**Historians, however, recognize that in some ways Christian differences today pale in comparison**



with those that exited among believers in the distant past. If we turn the clock back 1,850 years to the middle of the second century, we find people calling themselves "Christians" and followers of "the Christ" who subscribe to beliefs that no modern eye has seen or ear heard, Christians who believe that there are 2 different gods, or 32, or 365, Christians who claim that the Old Testament is an evil book inspired by an evil deity, Christians who say that God did not create the world and has never had any involvement with it, Christians who maintain that Jesus did not have a human body, or that he did not have a human soul, or that he was never born, or that he never died.

Of course this seems strange to today's normative Christian believer. Such lack of knowledge of the true origins of Christianity and the religious beliefs of the first Christians is rampant in the Christian church today. The vast majority of Christians today have an almost total lack of knowledge concerning the true origin of the faith they practice and the men and sects which formed the primitive faith and the later evolution of it into what they believe and practice today. Many people today would argue that such views expressed above could not be Christian. Little did they know that such "religious beliefs" were held by the man who gave us the "FIRST NEW TESTAMENT" in 140 C.E.

This fact should be bothersome to all Christians today; that the need for a "New" testament was originated by a man who believed that there were 2 different gods, that the Bible Jesus used was inspired by an evil deity, that Jesus was not human, that he was never born, but rather descended bodily from heaven, and that he never died. That should take your breath away! But that is the facts of the matter. The man of whom I speak is Marcion and we will get to him shortly.

What is striking to the historian, though, is that people who believed these things listed above claimed to be Christian. Even more, these believers invariably maintained that their religious ideas were taught by Jesus himself. In many instances, they would appeal to written proof, for they all possessed documents allegedly penned by Jesus' own apostles but which under the light of modern scholarship can be shown to be crafted by Gentile hands.

**Answer for yourself:** But did Jesus' apostles really write them or were many of these New Testament documents penned by men who "borrowed" the names of the Apostles for instant "recognition", "authority", and "acceptance"? That will have to be decided by you upon your own evaluation of the evidence at hand. I promise you it won't be hard to find the answer to this once you know what Jesus and his disciples really believed as orthodox Jews and what those who later came "in his name" believed that opposed this Jewish "mind of Christ."

The New Testament also contains books that were thought to have been written by Jesus' own apostles. These books, however, do not teach that there are several gods, or that the creator of the world is evil, or that Jesus did not have a real body.

- **Answer for yourself:** Are there historical grounds for thinking that the New Testament books actually were written by Jesus' apostles and that books supporting contrary views were forgeries?
- **Answer for yourself:** Indeed, how is it that some books claiming to be written by the apostles were included in the New Testament, but others were not?
- **Answer for yourself:** Moreover, even if the books that made it into the New Testament agree on certain fundamental points (for example, that there is only one God), is it possible that they might disagree on others (such as who Jesus and "the Christ" really are)?
- **Answer for yourself:** That is to say, if Christians in the second century, a hundred fifty years or so after Jesus, held such a wide range of beliefs, is it not possible that Christians of the first century (when the books of the New Testament were being written) did as well?
- **Answer for yourself:** Did all of the early Christians agree on the fundamental points of their religion?

These are some of the issues that we will consider as we begin to examine the earliest Christian writings. They are not, of course, the only issues. There is an extraordinarily broad range of important and intriguing

questions that readers bring to the New Testament - about where it came from, who its authors were, what their messages were, did they represent the historical Jesus accurately and if not...why not? - and many of these will occupy us at considerable length in the articles that follow. This will be a dedicated and in-depth study besides an involved one **but today truth is buried beneath 1,800 years of brainwashing and deception.**

As seen above, the issue of Christian diversity is a good place for us to begin our investigation. Not only can it provide a useful entree into important questions about the early stages of the Christian religion, starting with the teachings of Jesus, it can also enlighten us about the nature of the New Testament itself, specifically about **how and why these various books came to be gathered together by Marcion into one volume and why it was accepted by Christians as their sacred canon of scripture and later altered almost beyond recognition from it's original form in succeeding years and centuries.** This will become apparent the more you learn. Let me warn you such a study is not for the simple nor those who are frightened by truth that will shake you to your very core. **Let us never forget when undertaking such a study that our loving God never gave us a lie or deceived us; that is the handiwork of men and antisemites as you will quickly come to see.** With such renewed dedication to truth at all costs we proceed to find truth amidst fiction.

In closing I wish to remind you what Paul said in Romans 3:7:

***Rom 3:7 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? (KJV)***

***I don't know about you but I don't want lies about God or "the Christ"...I want the truth!***

**Answer for yourself:** There is only one thing I ask you to think upon until our next article; namely, how can we be sure that through Paul's lying we really got the truth about Jesus in the first place in this New Testament and the Pauline writings? **THINK!**

More on that later as you will come to see the connection between Marcion the Gnostic, Paul and the New Testament; but first some questions to ponder until we meet again in the next article in this series:

- **Answer for yourself:** Can it be shown that the New Testament and much of the teachings of the Gospels and the epistles do not represent the religious beliefs of Jesus the Jew of the first century but rather are more reflective of Gnosticism which today which has become blurred through time through later alteration of the earliest New Testament. Is today's "normative Christianity" representative of the earliest beliefs of "the Christ" and Jesus? **WOW...what a question and implications from that question!**
- **Answer for yourself:** Did the earliest New Testament come from Jewish Apostles like the tradition of Rome teaches or could someone unknown to most Christians today and who could not be called "a typical Christian" be responsible for it and the collection of such documents which formed the basis for the **FIRST New Testament?**
- **Answer for yourself:** Who was this person and what was his religious belief system that prompted the collection of such documents in the first place that form our **First New Testament?**
- **Answer for yourself:** Does Jesus, Paul, and Luke all represent fundamentally the same religion?

Something to think about...as you will come to see.

Let us begin our study in this website by investigating the major religious sects that fashioned Christianity in the early first century with special emphasis to their religious beliefs, the similarities, their differences, and their production of written document that represented their own respective beliefs and how they were merged later in the religious synthesis that culminates in the later versions of the New Testament. We begin our study with the religious diversity that existed in early Christianity: Jewish-Christian Adoptionists, Marcionite Christians, Gnostic Christians, and what I describe as "Proto-Orthodox Christians."



*Now let us get started at discovering the truth about the early Christians and their literature that would later compose the New Testament we carry today.*



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# THE TRUTH CONCERNING NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS AND THE CHRISTIAN CORRUPTION OF THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

We saw in the prior entitled ["Marcion And 'The Gospel Of The Lord' Or 'The Gospel Of Luke': What Came First?"](#) that what traditional Christian Fathers and what other Christians writers influenced by these early Church Fathers (Tertullian/Epiphanius) have said regarding Marcion is totally incorrect. Rather than discrediting Marcion for deleting much of what he did not want to use from a supposedly existing early copy of the Gospel of Luke we found conclusive evidence indicating just the opposite; rather than Marcion deleting portions of the Gospel of Luke we found that a later writer of the Gospel of Luke invented and added to the earlier Marcion "Gospel Of The Lord" in an effort to refute the earliest beliefs concerning "the Christ" as held by the earliest Christians. We saw that scholars can teach us that **a total 122 verses are found the the later Gospel of Luke which are not in Marcion's earliest "gospel." To this we found 23 extra verses in the 4th chapter of Luke were are not in the corresponding accounts in Marcion's gospel; totaling 145 verses, or more than three average chapters have been added later to the earliest gospel gathered by Marcion. If we then add the first three chapters of Luke, which are entirely missing the earlier gospel of Marcion the result is that more than six chapters, or more than one-fourth of the entire Gospel of Luke has been added to the earlier existing gospel of Marcion in attempts to undo the earliest understanding of "the Christ."**

**Rather than Marcion selecting and deleting parts of an existing gospel from the pen of Luke it was rather the writer of the Gospel of Luke which wrote an elongated version of a prior gospel record after Marcion's collection of his "Gospel of the Lord." We saw the evidence that suggests strongly that the Gospel of Luke was later written from an existing copy of gospel fragments of Marcion's First New Testament Gospel.**

## IS CHURCH TRADITION TO BE SEEN AS OUTRIGHT DECEPTION AND NOT TO BE TRUSTED?

Above we basically talked about the comparison of manuscripts. Let us look clearly into the subject of early New Testament manuscripts so that our readers fully understand just what we are talking about.

Church tradition assures us that there exists a large number of early New Testament manuscripts (mss). For the sake of consistency, we'll define "early" as 325 A.D., which is the date used in the quotation below. If this large number of manuscripts existed, it would not prove that the current received text of the New Testament contains the authentic words and teachings of Jesus. **However, what we're mainly concerned with here is the outright dishonest claims regarding the number of early New Testament manuscripts.** The propaganda of the self-proclaimed followers of Jesus reads as follows.



Josh McDowell assures us in Evidence That Demands A Verdict (vol..1, 1972 pgs.40-48; and Ostling, Time, January 23, 1995, pg.57) that we have in our possession over **24,000** New Testament manuscripts. Mr. McDowell instructs us that we have in our possession **5,300** known New Testament Greek manuscripts, **10,000** Latin Vulgates, and **9,300** other early versions (MSS), giving us **more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence. These, we are told, were mostly written before 325 A.D.**

In order to refute this outrageous claim (there's not one-tenth of the number mentioned!), further down in this document I provide a few quotations from The Jesus Legend, by, by G. A. Wells, which itself quotes other Biblical scholars that reveal the truth instead of inaccurate tradition.

This can be verified by spending a little time browsing the Internet at the [Table of Greek Manuscripts](#) page which contains a listing of all known early New Testament manuscripts and fragments. It is important to note "fragment," since many of the "manuscripts" are just that- small fragments. The footnotes to The Jesus Legend mention some manuscripts by their papyrus identifiers (i.e. p52, p90, p45, and p75) and it is necessary to understand that these correspond to the manuscript numbers "ms. nr." listed on the [Table of Greek Manuscripts](#) page. Thus by using this on-line reference, you can personally verify the truth of the claim of Christian propaganda. Not surprisingly, their claims are wholly false and deceptive.

It is interesting to see that a non-Christian scholar, G. A. Wells, tells us the truth by saying that: **"of all the synoptic manuscripts which can be dated to the fourth century or earlier, only two (P<sup>45</sup> and P<sup>75</sup>, both of the third century) contain more than a chapter."**

This can be verified by spending a little time at the [Table of Greek Manuscripts](#) page.

**Answer for yourself:** Did he just tell us that of all these numerous New Testament manuscript fragments that there are ONLY 2 of these that are as long as one chapter in length? He sure did!!!

**It's true -ALL of the other pre-fourth century manuscripts contain only a few verses!!! However, don't forget that Christian author and apologist for the Christian faith cited above (Josh McDowell) claimed "24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament" which "were mostly written before 325 A.D"!!!**

Like many other Christian apologists, Jochen Katz simply spreads this false claim when he says: ***"And I believe that with the basis of many thousands of manuscripts for comparison we can be very confident that the text is today faithfully restored and the researchers in textual criticism assert that the actual literal text is restored to 99.8% leaving only a very few uncertainties."*** We need to ask right now a very important question.

**Answer for yourself:** How old are these *"thousands of manuscripts"* and how much of the New Testament they contain? Whether ignorance or deception is behind this statement, it's worthless none the less.

**Another example of the complete deception of Christian writers accepting prior Church Tradition without ever investigating it for themselves** is the statement by the Christian author that ***"Until two years ago, the oldest assumed manuscript which we possessed was the St. John papyrus (P52)"***. Unfortunately for him, we all now know what "P52" means! We can simply go to the [Table of Greek Manuscripts](#) and see how much of the New Testament that this *"manuscript"* contains.

**Answer for yourself:** How much?

**Exactly five verses of the "Gospel of John" (18:31-33,37-38)!!! However, the author was using it as an example of a "New Testament Manuscript" - never bothering to mention how small a "portion" it really is. A reader who didn't know any better could go away thinking that this St. John papyrus - and**

**the others referred to - are complete New Testament "manuscripts". Need I say more?**

Suffice it to say that the overwhelming majority of manuscripts that this dishonest author refers to have no bearing on proving the textual veracity of everything in the current New Testament. **All of these manuscripts - regardless of how early - date back to the time when there were already doctrinal and "Christological" debates within the early Church.**

**Answer for yourself:** Did we see in the prior article, ["Marcion And 'The Gospel Of The Lord' Or 'The Gospel Of Luke': What Came First?"](#) such a Christological debate and difference of opinion that resulted in Rome rewriting the First New Testament and giving the world a new beliefs about Jesus as "the Christ" which was not held by the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus? WE SURE DID!

The facts are that we do not possess the Greek New Testament as it first existed in the days of Marcion; we sadly only have Rome's falsification of it. **What we have is a mass of manuscripts, of which only about three hundred date from before A.D. 800. A mere thirty-four of these are older than A.D. 400, of which only four were at any time complete. All these differ, and all at one time or another had authority as the known text.**

Ehrman's recent and thorough discussion of the New Testament text in [The Orthodox Corruption Of Scripture](#) leads him to conclude that, during the earliest period of its transmission, that the New Testament "was in a state of flux" and "came to be more or less standardized in some regions by the fourth century, and subject to fairly rigid control (by comparison) only in the Byzantine period" ([Corruption](#), p. 28). **He adds in a note that this is the view of a wide range of scholars. This is one of the best books you can read to introduce you to the unreliability of the New Testament due to the theological adulteration of it by Rome.**

If you read Ehrman, you will find concerning the New Testament that **"the text was regularly adjusted in such areas as the birth of Jesus, the agony in the garden, the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus's death, his cry of dereliction, resurrection and ascension. . . . And these adjustments were made NOT by those who were labelled as heretics, but by the 'proto-orthodox', to use Ehrman's term". Again, "Ehrman vividly shows how scribes have preserved or created within the manuscripts they were copying reflections of early Christological debates that helped to shape mainstream Christianity"** (*Novum Testamentum*, 36 [1994], pp. 405-06). In other words the New Testament was changed by Rome repeatedly in chronological succession as their Church Councils hammered out the Roman understanding of "the Christ" over the centuries.

**Answer for yourself:** Have I not been teaching this fact for years in hopes of alerting and warning Christians of the idolatry on page after page of our New Testaments? **No wonder the Jews cannot believe in our Christian Jew named Jesus whom passes off as a Jewish Messiah!!!!!!!!!!**

***It is time to look at Judaism for the truth about the Messiah and the Jesus of the First Century.***

**This dishonesty with the New Testament texts and manuscripts is exactly what we saw in the previous article where the writer of the Gospel of Luke took the foundation of Marcion's Gospel of the Lord and turned the "allegorical" Christ into a "literal" human Christ and applied it exclusively to the Jesus of the First Century.** This is **Roman Creational Christology** and the evolution of it as decided for you and me Roman Catholicism. In this evolutionary process we find, in Ehrman and others, the movement away from a "allegorical Christ" as held by the earliest Christians to one which is given flesh to the exclusion of "the Christ" being within everyone created in the image of God. That means all of us. Succeeding Roman Church Councils debated these issues and the manuscripts as you have seen were altered correspondingly to



**reflect such later decisions. We end up with a lie and never know it. We cry tears over what we read about Jesus in the New Testament never realizing it is often no more truthful than *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*.**

***It is time to look at Judaism for the truth about the Messiah and the Jesus of the First Century.***



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# SCHOLARS TELL THE TRUTH: THE EARLY CHURCH & THEIR THEOLOGICAL ALTERATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT OVER THE CENTURIES

If you have been faithful to study the articles in order on this website then you are seeing for yourself the truth concerning the alterations made to the New Testament over hundreds of years whereby important religious concepts originally held by the ancients and the earliest Christians were later changed and altered by the Roman Church in order to impose their own "flavor" of Christianity upon the world.

Now let our examination go even further into this deception.

Three hundred years after the time of Jesus), there were many different versions of the Gospel story and the teachings of Jesus (Isaac Asimov, Asimov's Guide To The Bible: The Old and New Testaments (New York: Avenue Books, 1981). Asimov goes on to tell the truth about the presumed authorship of these New Testament documents when he says that then, as now, no one was quite certain who wrote them, or when or where they were written. The teachings of the Christian Church varied from one area to another and each geographical area contested with others for "authority" for their own unique understanding and interpretation of "the Christ" and Jesus. As you would expect different sects of Christianity evolved around these different teachings and there arose a need to decide on a uniform, unified code on which to base future Christian doctrine.

Bruce Metzger also comments regarding the development of the canonization of the current New Testament. In one of his many books entitled The Canon Of The New Testament: Its Origin, Significance & Development he shares with the reader that the Bible used by the early Jewish Christians consisted of the Old Testament and some Jewish apocryphal literature. They did not use a New Testament as it had not been written yet and disregarded the Pauline epistles as not accurate to the truth concerning the gospel preached by Jesus. Along with this written authority of the Jewish Tanakh and Jewish apocryphal literature went the accepted traditions, chiefly oral, of sayings attributed to Jesus. This is the Bible used by such as those we read about in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council. On the other hand, authors who belonged to the 'Hellenistic Wing' of the Church refer more frequently to writings that later came to be included in the New Testament. Metzger is very truthful when he says they very rarely regarded such documents as the Pauline epistles as "Scripture". Metzger also give us insights into the fact that at this time there was as yet no conception of the duty of exact quotation from books that were not yet in the full sense canonical. Consequently, it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to ascertain which New Testament books were known to early Christian writers; our evidence does not become clear until the end of second century (Bruce M Metzger, The Canon Of The New Testament: Its Origin, Significance & Development (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997) .



**In other words, there was no specific 'canon' of the New Testament known to the early Christians. The 'canon' that we possess today was a late development of the Roman Church as they collected, sifted, selected, discarded, altered, wrote, and even invented much of what we carry around today in our Bibles believing it is the "inerrant" Word of God in the New Testament.** As shown earlier in this website and as I will continue to reveal what we have today as our New Testament is the refutation of the earliest First New Testament collected by Marcion which consisted of the collection of the Pauline writings in his day and a collection of oral sayings and oral traditions regarding Jesus which were written down from memory by followers in various places. **Furthermore, even those who adhere to the documents that form the 'canon' of the New Testament today need to understand that these writings did not in their day posses the authority among people as did the Jewish Bible. These First and Second New Testaments were not regarded on the same level as the true "Scriptures" of the Jewish people.**

But that was to change. In the year 325 C.E., it was agreed that representatives from several different sects of Christianity would have a meeting and each would bring with them the writings upon which they were basing their teachings. Some compromise of the various versions of Christian teachings as found in different localities would have to be agreed upon for the Christian church to grow as a unit, as each separate sect in these days had varying beliefs and spread different versions of belief where they went. Disunity instead of unity was the rule of the day. Political expedience necessitated the people find a common ground and this ground was to be interpreted by Constantine as the area of religions. Karl Marx understood such brilliant thinking when he said "religion is the opiate of the masses." It would be through religion and the unification of the diverse people of the Roman Empire throught religion that Constantine hoped for the continual power of the Roman Empire to continue. **The meeting called the Council of Nicea was held in Nicea, Turkey and the disputes among all those calling themselves Christians were intense. The disputes were not only about the points of Christian doctrine, but also about which of these many writings were authentic since many varying beliefs about "the Christ" let alone Jesus reflected differences in beliefs of the people who by now had many of these beliefs committed to writing and attributed apostolic authority to them.** In one letter from Fauste to St. Augustine, Fauste says

***It is thus that your predecessors have inserted in the scriptures of our Lord many things, which, although they carry His name agree not with His doctrines. This is not surprising, since that we have often proved that these things have not been written by Himself, nor by his apostles, but that for the greater part they are founded upon tales, upon vague reports and put together by I know not what, half-Jews, but with little agreement between them, and which they have nevertheless published under the names of the Apostles of our Lord, and have thus attributed to them their own errors and their lies (Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason (New York, Prometheus Press, 1984).***

Bart Ehrman, as a host of other scholars, informs us that the canonization of the New Testament was influenced and supported by the Emperor Constantine of the Roman Empire. Ehrman informs us that the Roman empire was a pagan empire, however, it was the dominant "superpower" of the time. Anyone who could enlist its aid would have an unconquerable ally at their side and would themselves be undefeatable. **As mentioned above on the Roman side, Emperor Constantine was greatly troubled by the swelling ranks of his Christian subjects and the great division among their ranks which did not bode well for the continued stability of his empire.**

Ehrman goes on in his book to tell us that most of these fringe sects now began to fade into insignificance and the matter was now left between those who believed in the Unity of God and those who believed in a "Trinity." The Roman empire's support fluctuated between these two groups for a long time until the Trinitarian's finally gained the upper hand and all but wiped the Unitarians off the face of the earth. **Ehrman, in his The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, informs us that over the next centuries they slowly selected and collected the "truly inspired" gospels into one volume which later became the "New Testament."** **They burned all other gospels; many of which found their origin with the earliest Jewish believers of**



**Jesus.** Many sweeping campaigns of "Inquisition" were launched by Rome against those who would not accept this religious compromise of evil where untruths were not taught about Jesus let alone "the Christ." Everyone found possessing any of these "false" Gospels was put to death and his Gospel burned. Orthodoxy was now unorthodoxy and to think or believe differently than what was prescribed now by Constantine and Rome meant sure death. The truth as well as true believers went "underground" and feigned Christianity in order to survive. The Knights Templar are a great example of Christians who held these earliest secret beliefs of the earliest Christians concerning Jesus that they could not share if they wished to live (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, p. 7).

Ehrman further says that the classical understanding of the relationship of orthodoxy and heresy met a devastating challenge in 1934 with the publication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, possibly the most significant book on early Christianity written in modern times. Bauer argued that the early Christian church in fact did not comprise a single orthodoxy from which emerged a variety of competing heretical minorities. Instead, early Christianity embodied a number of divergent forms, no one of which represented the clear and powerful majority of believers against all others. In some regions, what was later to be termed 'heresy' was in fact the original and only form of Christianity. In other regions, views later deemed heretical coexisted with views that would come to be embraced by the church as a whole, with most believers not drawing hard and fast lines in demarcation between the competing views. To this extent, 'orthodoxy,' in the sense of a unified group advocating an apostolic doctrine accepted by the majority of Christians everywhere, did not exist in the second and third centuries. Nor was 'heresy' secondarily derived from an original teaching through an infusion of Jewish ideas or pagan philosophy.

Beliefs that were, at later times, embraced as orthodoxy and condemned as heresy were in fact competing interpretations of Christianity, one of which eventually (but not initially) acquired domination because of singular historical and social forces. Only when one social group had exerted itself sufficiently over the rest of Christendom did a 'majority' opinion emerge; only then did the 'right belief' represent the view of the Christian church at large (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, p. 7).

The text of the New Testament developed freely for quite some time depending upon the whims and fancies of Christians. As Kurt and Barbara Aland tells us their The Text Of The New Testament, p. 69, that until the beginning of the fourth century the text of the New Testament developed freely. It was the "living text" in the Greek literary tradition, unlike the text of the Hebrew Old Testament, which was subject to strict controls because (in the oriental tradition) the consonantal text was holy. And the New Testament text continued to be a "living text" as long as it remained a manuscript tradition, even when the Byzantine church molded it to the procrustean bed of the standard and officially prescribed text. Even for later scribes, for example, the parallel passages of the Gospels were so familiar that they would adapt the text of one Gospel to that of another. They also felt themselves free to make corrections in the text, improving it by their own standard of correctness, whether grammatically, stylistically, or more substantively. This was all the more true of the early period, when the text had not been attained canonical status, especially in the earliest period when Christians considered themselves to be filled with the Spirit. As a consequence the text of the early period was many-faceted, and each manuscript had its own peculiar character.

In face of all the evidences, we still cannot see the justification for the claim of Christianity that the New Testament is wholly the "inerrant" word of God. This short testimony above as presented just from these few scholars and not preachers tells the truth about the reliability and authority of the New Testament. I quickly began to see these same issues and problems surface in my exhaustive study of the New Testament. I was not only shocked but hurt by what I was uncovering in my years of study following graduation from Seminary. What I had been taught in Seminary could not hold up to the light of intense scrutiny and study where the evidences of such forgery of the New Testament could be seen by anyone if they had the time, desire, and resources before them that are all necessary if one wants to come to the truth about the New Testament.

We have in this website began to see the truth in these regards; namely what is passed off today in the Roman



**Second New Testament as a Divine Revelation expressing the earliest beliefs of Christainty and what the earliest followers of Jesus believed of him is anything but the truth of the matter. Instead we are seeing that what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" and Jesus as pictured in Rome's refutation of the First New Testament as handed down to us today in Rome's Second New Testament. The implications for such facts and knowledge seeing the light of day are tremendous and threaten the very foundation of Christianity itself as it is known today.**



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## THE "FIRST" AND "SECOND" NEW TESTAMENTS: "WHO" & "WHAT" WAS BEHIND THEIR PRODUCTION?



**Understand this will possibly be the most difficult study of your entire life if you are a New Testament believing Christian.** What you will see and encounter in your studies on these webpages will both excite you, sadden you, and challenge you to your very core because many cherished religious doctrines and dogmas held by the typical Christian and today's Christian Church, as found on the pages of the supposed infallible and inerrant New Testament, will be exposed as little more than the fruit of antisemitism, replacement religion, and [sun worship of the Gentiles and the later Gentile Church of Rome](#). You will, throughout this website, come to realize the the earliest concepts of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" are completely different from the ones we have been taught today that stem from Rome's "Second" New Testament. You will see that the earliest and "First" New Testament given to us by Marcion in 140 C.E. expressed a whole different concept of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" as held by the earliest Christians. Let that dawn upon you for a second; namely, what we have inherited from the pens of Rome in the second century in this replacement New Testament" is but a refutation of what the earliest followers of "the Christ" believed in the earliest times.

If you are a diligent student I will prove this to you throughout this website as we not only get familiar with the various religious concepts concerning "the Christ" but examine differences in early manuscripts and texts which will show the changing of the earliest Christological concepts by Rome over the centuries through their additions and deletions to the already existing "First" New Testament.

If one undertakes a serious study of the history of early Christianity one is struck at the tremendous diversity of the early "Christian" faith which over two hundred years narrows to only include certain texts which support only certain beliefs. Understand "these texts" are the ones given by Rome because Rome won the wars; both militarily and theologically due to the power of the Roman Empire. I will try to simplify this for the reader.

- **At the heart of this conflict of theologies concerning "the Christ" one finds the struggle between two major factions and two different approaches to understanding "the Christ":**
  - **"Gnostic Jewish and Gentile Allegorists"**
  - **The later "Western Christian Roman Literalists"**
- **Said another way one finds an emerging and consistent conflict between the earliest Jewish and Gentile Gnostic believers (the earliest Christians) and later emerging Western Catholic Church well into the 5th century when Western Christianity will totally triumph over this earliest Gnostic understanding of "the Christ"**
- **Said in an even simpler way one finds consistent conflict between the presentation of "the Christ" (and Jesus) as depicted in the Gospel of Thomas and Gnostic**



**thought and the Gospel of John (one an allegory of Divine Principles and one literalized as the historical Christ inserted into a chronological timeline)**

## **THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT WAS A Gnostic DOCUMENT ESPOUSING Gnostic IDEAS OF "THE CHRIST"**

It is time to become familiar with the name of Marcion; labeled a "heretic" by Rome and their literal interpretation of "the Christ" as opposed to the allegorical understanding of "the Christ" as held by the earliest Christians. Don't let us get confused between "Christ" and "Messiah" as these are two entirely different concepts. Israel expected a historical Messiah but my focus here is on the Pauline concept of "the Christ" as he understood it and how Rome later taught concerning it that was completely opposite to the views held by the earliest Christians in that day and time.

It is ironic that perhaps one of the most influential of figures in Church History is also one of the most reviled heretics in the mind of Rome: Marcion. Although Marcion's ideas were later to be completely rejected by the Apostolic Fathers of the second-century Gentile Roman Church, the very need to reject and refute them should give us pause to reflect what these earliest "religious beliefs" of "the Christ" entailed which were held by the earliest Christians and only later rejected by Rome and Western Christianity in the second century.

**Answer for yourself:** If it can be shown that the earliest understanding of Jesus as "the Christ" was understood in only an "allegorical" sense and that the First New Testament that reflected them was later rejected by Rome in the second century then are our current "literal" beliefs about Jesus as the "Christ" as taken from the Roman Second New Testament of Western Christianity correct today? **THINK A WHILE ON THIS!**

Understand the impact made by Marcion's First New Testament in 140 C.E. that later forced the second-century Gentile Roman Church to refute, controvert, and rebut these earliest beliefs about Jesus and "the Christ" and the role of Jesus connected to this "Christ." These "second century religious beliefs" and refutations of Marcion and Gnosticism, both Jewish and Gentile, found life and expression in Rome's refutation of the then existing First New Testament of Marcion the Gnostic. **It is this Roman refutation of Marcion's earliest understanding of "the Christ" in his collection of "the" First New Testament that I will call in this website the "Second New Testament."**

**Rome countered these earliest Gnostic Christian beliefs about Jesus and "the Christ" with their own Second New Testament which altered significantly Marcion's existing First New Testament and the previously held beliefs of God's Christ by the earliest Jewish and Gentile Gnostic followers of Jesus.**

**Answer for yourself:** Can it be proven that Marcion's understanding of "the Christ" can be traced all the way back to Egypt and their earliest understanding of God on this planet? YES! But that is another study left for a future website that I have planned. The truth about God is out there; not just everywhere!

**Answer for yourself:** It is possible that the gospels and the epistles that we were led to cherish and trust in our existing New Testaments given to us by Rome are in many ways a tragic departure from the earliest Christian beliefs about Jesus and "the Christ" and we not know it? I will show you that it is!!!

This is news to most Christians who are totally unfamiliar with the history of the New Testament, its origins, the groups that fought over it for almost five hundred years; let alone its canonization. Our study must continue.

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the "first" and "second" new testaments: "who" and "what" was behind their production?







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# THE NEW TESTAMENT: INSPIRATION AND AUTHORSHIP???

**Answer for yourself:** Is the Bible that we have in our hands today unchanged?

**Answer for yourself:** Or has it undergone extensive revisions and alterations?

Truth is the first victim in the Christian apologetical literature. This is because if they tell the truth about the Church history and its role in formulating the Bible (or Bibles) as well as the manuscript tradition of the New Testament, belief in the Bible as the "Word" of God would take the beating and the Churches would go absolutely empty. Hence it is not be surprising to find an average Christian's knowledge about his own scriptures is pretty close to zero.

Christian apologists down through history have appealed to the "inspiration" of the New Testament. Understand that the New Testament is made up of manuscripts fragments. To the people in the early centuries of Christianity these manuscripts were the New Testament text.

It is to be remembered that the manuscript tradition of the New Testament is non-uniform. The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible (Under "Text, NT") reminds us that:

*It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the NT in which the MS tradition is wholly uniform.*

## THE NEW TESTAMENT, ITS MANUSCRIPTS AND ITS PROBLEMS

Before going into the issue of accuracy of the New Testament, it is worthwhile establishing what are the problems with the New Testament manuscripts. The New Testament is now known, whole or in part, in nearly five thousand Greek manuscripts. Each one of these manuscripts differ from other. Hence The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible is forced to say:

It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the NT in which the MS tradition is wholly uniform (George Arthur Buttrick (Ed.), The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible, Volume 4, 1962 (1996 Print), Abingdon Press, Nashville, pp. 594-595 (Under "Text, NT").

The lack of uniformity in the manuscript tradition is further aggravated by the fact that the original copies of the New Testament books have perished long ago. Hence there is no way of verifying what the 'original' reading is. The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible again informs us that:

*The original copies of the NT books have, of course, long since disappeared. This fact should not cause surprise. In the first place, they were written on papyrus, a very fragile and perishable material. In the second place, and probably of even more importance, the original copies of the NT books were not looked upon as scripture by those of the early Christian communities* (Ibid, p. 599).

**Bruce Metzger concludes that:**

*For early Jewish Christians the Bible consisted of the Old Testament and some Jewish apocryphal literature. Along with this written authority went traditions, chiefly oral, of sayings attributed to Jesus. On the other hand, authors who belonged to the 'Hellenistic Wing' of the Church refer more frequently to writings that later came to be included in the New Testament. At the same time, however, they very rarely regarded such documents as 'Scripture'. Furthermore, there was as yet no conception of the duty of exact quotation from books that were not yet in the full sense canonical. Consequently, it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to ascertain which New Testament books were known to early Christian writers; our evidence does not become clear until the end of second century* (Bruce M Metzger, The Canon Of The New Testament: Its Origin, Significance & Development, 1997, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 72-73).

Coming back to the main problem of issue of the non-uniform manuscript tradition of the New Testament, The Anchor Bible Dictionary mentions about the sky-rocketing number of variant readings:

*Within this context, what NT textual materials have come down to us? As early as 1707, John Mill claimed that the (relatively few) NT mss examined by him contained about 30,000 variant readings (Vincent 1903: 6); 200 years later B. B. Warfield (1907: 13) indicated that some 180,000 or 200,000 various readings had been 'counted' in the then existing NT mss, and in more recent times M. M. Parvis reported that examination of only 150 Greek mss of Luke revealed about 30,000 readings there alone, and he suggested that the actual quantity of variant readings among all NT manuscripts was likely to be much higher than the 150,000 to 250,000 that had been estimated in modern times (Parvis IDB 4: 594-95). Perhaps 300,000 differing readings is a fair figure for the 20th century (K. W. Clark 1962: 669). The textual critic must devise methods by which to sort through these myriad readings and to analyze the many mss that contain them* (David Noel Freedman (Ed.), The Anchor Bible Dictionary On CD-ROM, 1997, New York: Doubleday (CD-ROM Edition by Logos Research Systems), (Under "Textual Criticism, NT")).]

Most of the variant readings are brushed aside as 'unimportant' scribal errors by Christian missionaries. But the reality is different. The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible informs us that:

*Many thousands of the variants which are found in the MSS of the NT were put there deliberately. They are not merely the result of error or of careless handling of the text. Many were created for theological or dogmatic reasons (even though they may not affect the substance of Christian dogma). It is because the books of the NT are religious books, sacred books, canonical books, that they were changed to conform to what the copyist believed to be the true reading. His interest was not in the "original reading but in the "true reading." This is precisely the attitude toward the NT which prevailed from the earliest times to the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the invention of printing. The thousands of Greek MSS, MSS of the versions, and quotations of the Church Fathers provide the source for our knowledge of the earliest or original text of the NT and of the history of the transmission of that text before the invention of printing* (George Arthur Buttrick (Ed.), The Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible, Volume 1, p. 595 (Under "Text, NT").

Since the 'original reading' of the New Testament books was unknown the copyists went for what could be the 'true reading' and hence adding variants to the already existing variants unknown to them. It is worthwhile to add that as early as in the time of Jerome, he complained of the copyists who:

*write down not what they find but what they think is the meaning; and while they attempt to rectify*



*the errors of others, they merely expose their own* (Bruce M Metzger, The Text Of The New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption & Restoration, 1992, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 1950).

The present day textual criticism of the New Testament also involves knowing what could be the 'original' reading.

*Since - like virtually all ancient literature - no autographs are extant for the NT, its most likely original text must be reconstructed from these imperfect, often widely divergent, later copies* (David Noel Freedman (Ed.), The Anchor Bible Dictionary On CD-ROM, (Under "Textual Criticism, NT")).

There is, of course, no guarantee that the 'original' reading could be obtained, as we shall see later. This leads us to the issue of how much of the New Testament that we have in our hands today is variant free or 'accurate'.

**Answer for yourself:** So, if the Bible is really the word of God then why did the scribes made intentional changes? Certainly the Holy Spirit was not guiding them to make unintentional errors and more so when making the intentional changes!

Thus, the modern day Greek New Testaments are the critical editions produced by eclectic method, where the preferred reading is determined on a case-by-case basis, from among numerous variants offered by the early manuscripts and versions.

## DO WE HAVE THE "ORIGINAL" READING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?

New Testament scholars like David Parker from University of Birmingham add a word of caution and differentiate between what is desirable, i.e., to know the 'original' text and what can be extracted from the colossal mass of variant readings in the New Testament manuscripts. Therefore, these critical editions of the Greek New Testament do not completely replicate the evidence of any one manuscript. In fact, a careful reader of the critical editions of the New Testament would notice that not all the manuscripts contained in the lists of witnesses that are found in the introductory matter are used in the apparatus.

*We have, however, to distinguish at any rate between the desirable and attainable. Caution rightly prevails in the Introduction to the most common used edition of the Greek New Testament, the small blue volume known as Nestle-Aland:*

*Novum Testamentum Graece seeks to provide the reader with the critical appreciation of the whole textual tradition... It should naturally be understood that this text is a working text (in the sense of the century-long Nestle tradition); it is not to be considered as definitive, but as a stimulus to further efforts towards redefining and verifying the text of the New Testament. (D C Parker, The Living Text Of The Gospels, 1997, Cambridge University Press, p. 3.11)*

Further, David Parker emphasizes the fact that the text in the Novum Testamentum Graece edited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland (27th edition, Stuttgart, 1993) was agreed upon by the committee as the 'best' reading and it has nothing to do with the 'original' text.

*This text was agreed by a committee. When they disagreed on the best reading to print, they voted. Evidently, they agreed either by a majority or unanimously that their text was the best available. But it does not follow that they believed their text to be 'original'. On the whole, the textual critics have always been reluctant to claim so much. Other users of the Greek New Testament accord them too*

*much honour in treating the text as definitive.*(Ibid.).

So, as far as the Novum Testamentum Graece (edited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland) is concerned, one can say that the committee itself does not make a claim that it restored the 'original' text of the Bible!

It is worthwhile adding that the committee at one point of time consisted of Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Allen Paul Wikgren and Carlo Maria Martini. These five names should be actually expanded to seven as Nida and Barbara Aland also made significant contributions (Aland & Aland, The Text Of The New Testament, Op.Cit, p. 33.13).

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, whose names are synonymous with the best of modern New Testament textual criticism, inform us about the various problems with the committee text.

*A "committee text" of this kind is occasionally regarded as problematical, and at times it may be so. In a number of instances it represents a compromise, for none of the editors can claim a perfect acceptance record of all recommendations offered.*(Ibid, p. 34).

In the footnotes, Aland and Aland mention one of the dissenting votes of the editorial committee:

*This may be inferred (at least to a degree, because not all the committee members were equally quick to write) from the dissenting notes included in A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, a volume compiled by Metzger at the request of the editorial committee utilizing the minutes of the committee sessions (London and New York: 1971; 2nd ed., 1975). Of the total of thirty dissenting votes, seventeen represent Metzger alone; eight, Metzger and Wikgren; two, Wikgren alone; one, Metzger and Martini; one, Metzger and Kurt Aland; and one, Aland alone. While a certain tendency may be detected here in the distribution of majorities and minorities, the variety of combinations also witnesses to the lack of any consistent lines of division.*(Ibid.).

Further, they highlight the criticism of their own critical apparatus and its methodology and of course, its defense as well as the problem of textual criticism arising from the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament itself.

*On the whole each of the editors is probably satisfied that the new text represents the best that can be achieved in the present state of knowledge. In evaluating the new text from a philological view the objection can admittedly be raised that the procedure followed (of textual decisions based on shifting majorities) is anomalous; one of the basic principles of philology is that a critical text should be edited by a single responsible editor following consistent principles. This objection is quite reasonable, but it is not relevant to the present situation. Editorial methodology for a classical Greek (or Latin) text proceeds essentially by constructing a stemma to demonstrate the mutual relationships of its extant manuscripts, and then reconstructing the original text on the basis of insights gained from a complete view of the history of the text (distinguishing daughter manuscripts from their parent exemplars, and eliminating them from further consideration). But the construction of such a stemma for the New Testament text is inconceivable either now or in the foreseeable future, not only because the number of witnesses to the New Testament text is incomparably greater than for any profane Greek text (in addition to more than fifty-four hundred Greek manuscripts there are also early versions and quotations by Church Fathers), but also because of basic factors characteristic of the transmission of the New Testament text. Due to the constant change of relationships among manuscripts, each New Testament text requires its own individual treatment with a fresh consideration of not only the external but of the internal factors as well.*



*The label of "eclecticism" which has frequently been applied to this method is not strictly appropriate, and suggests false associations. Perhaps the modern method of New Testament textual criticism may be more aptly described as a local-genealogical method (i.e., applying to each passage individually the approach used by classical philology for a whole tradition). When editorial responsibility is not borne by a single scholar working alone but shared by several scholars (assuming that each is duly qualified with the necessary knowledge and skills, and is at home with the history of New Testament textual transmission), the deliberations of such a committee promise to issue in a far more thorough evaluation of the viewpoints and possibilities even if, or rather precisely because, each of the editors represents a different background and perspective (Ibid, pp. 34-35.16).*

So, this is the story of the Committee Text, i.e., the text which is agreed upon by a committee. Nota Bene: **It has nothing to do with the individual members of the committee being inspired by God or their text is inspired by God, leave alone they restoring the Original Text!**

Even in recent times many Christians have tried to propagate the New Testament to be the word of God as written by "inspired" scribes. Despite what they would like to believe, many discoveries, however, refute this belief. Most of the books of the Bible are not known, and is simply attributed to certain authors which, when examined, shows that they could not have written it. Richard E. Friedman aptly describes the situation of Bible "authorship".

*People have been reading the Bible for nearly two thousand years. They have taken it literally, figuratively, or symbolically. They have regarded it as divinely dictated, revealed, or inspired, or as a human creation. They have acquired more copies of it than of any other book. It is quoted (and misquoted) more often than other books. It is translated (and mistranslated) more than others as well. It is called a great work of literature, the first work of history. It is at the heart of Christianity and Judaism. Ministers, priests, and rabbis preach it. Scholars spend their lives studying and teaching it in universities and seminaries. People read it, study it, admire it, disdain it, write about it, argue about it, and love it. People have lived by it and died for it. **And we do not know who wrote it.** (Richard E. Friedman, Who Wrote The Bible, (Harper San Francisco, 1989), p. 15.*

Bart Ehrman makes an interesting observation regarding the written text of the New Testament manuscripts:

*The New Testament manuscripts were not produced impersonally by machines capable of flawless reproduction. They were copied by hand, by living, breathing human beings who were deeply rooted in the conditions and controversies of their day. Did the scribes' polemical contexts influence the way they transcribed their sacred Scriptures? The burden of the present study is that they did, that theological disputes, specifically disputes over Christology, prompted Christian scribes to alter the words of Scripture in order to make them more serviceable for the polemical task. **Scribes modified their manuscripts to make them more patently 'orthodox' and less susceptible to 'abuse' by the opponents of orthodoxy.** (Bart Herman, The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, p. 4).*

## THE PROBLEMS SURROUNDING ASCRIBING DEFINITE AUTHORSHIP TO THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Let us start with "The Gospel according to Matthew". It has been assumed that the author of the Gospel of Matthew was Matthew himself, one of the disciples of Jesus however, the internal evidence proves otherwise. Matthew did not write the Gospel attributed to him:

*"...And as Jesus passed forth thence, he (Jesus) saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he (Jesus) saith unto him (Matthew), follow me (Jesus) and he (Matthew) arose, and followed him (Jesus)." (Matthew 9:9)*

It does not need to take a Biblical scholar or a rocket scientist to figure out that neither Jesus nor Matthew wrote this verse of "Matthew". This verse points to the fact that there is a **third person besides Jesus and Matthew and that person wrote the "Gospel According to Matthew"**. J. B. Philips, an Anglican translator of the Bible, in the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, reluctantly acknowledges this fact:

**Early tradition ascribed this Gospel to the apostle Matthew, but scholars nowadays almost all reject this view. "The author, whom we still can conveniently call Matthew, has plainly drawn on the mysterious "Q", which may have been a collection of oral traditions. He has used Mark's Gospel freely, though he has rearranged the order of events and has in several instances used different words for what is plainly the same story. The style is lucid, calm and "tidy". Matthew writes with a certain judiciousness as though he himself had carefully digested his material and is convinced not only of its truth but of the divine pattern that lies behind the historic facts"** (J. B. Philips, The Gospels, (Geoffrey Bless, London), Introduction.

Another gospel worth mentioning is the "Gospel According to John". This gospel is so different from the other three Synoptic Gospels that it is categorized distinctly from the other three. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) stand together and are in several respects different from the Fourth Gospel (according to John). It is commonly attributed to John son of Zebedee the Apostle of Christ, which makes it an eyewitness account of Christ's life and works but there were also dissident voices. K. Luke notes that

***Irenaeus mentions groups who rejected Gospel of John. The Roman presbyter Gaius, appealing to the differences between Synoptics and Johannine Gospel, concluded that the later was the work of heresiarch Cenrinthus. Another group that repudiated the Gospel was the Alogoi. The negative position, it should be remembered never won acceptance in the early church, and any number of testimonies can be cited in support of the apostolic origin of the Gospel according to John*** (K. Luke, Companion to the Bible, Vol 2, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1988), p. 9).

Sometimes it is an individual's own silence which proves to be the most deafening proclamation. For the period of a century and more the only "Scriptures" used by the first Jewish followers of Jesus were the Greek Septuagint translations (commonly designated LXX) of the Hebrew Old Testament, "the Law and the Prophets", supplemented by various Jewish apocrypha and the Sibylline Oracles (150 BC to AD 180); these were the only "authorities" appealed to by the early "Church Fathers" when preaching their new faith. Nowhere do they quote the books which we know today as the "New Testament."

Naturally, if the "history" of the Trinitarian Church regarding their chosen Gospels and what are claimed to be the inspired writings of Jesus' first Apostles were true, and these writings had indeed been accepted as authoritative at that time, then they would have been the most precious and potent documents of preaching for their doctrine. Undoubtedly, they would have spoken of nothing else, but would have quoted them and appealed to their authority at every turn as they have been doing through the centuries since. **But, for some 150 years, little or nothing besides the Old Testament and these Oracles were known or quoted.** As said by the great critic, Solomon Reinach

***With the exception of Papias, who speaks of a narrative by Mark, and a collection of sayings of Jesus, no Christian writer of the first half of the second century (i.e., up to 150 C.E.) quotes the Gospels or their reputed authors*** (Solomon Reinach, Orpheus a General History Of Religions, p. 218).

Grolier's Encyclopedia says under the heading "New Testament, canon":



*The process by which the canon of the New Testament was formed began in the 2d century, probably with a collection of ten letters of Paul. Toward the end of that century, Irenaeus argued for the unique authority of the portion of the Canon called the Gospels. Acceptance of the other books came gradually. The church in Egypt used more than the present 27 books, and the Syriac-speaking churches fewer. The question of an official canon became urgent during the 4th century. It was mainly through the influence of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, and because Jerome included the 27 books in his Latin version of the Bible called the Vulgate, that the present canon came to be accepted..(Grolier's Encyclopedia, under "New Testament, canon."*

**Notice how the writings of Paul were the first to be accepted by the Trinitarian church. All other gospels were then either accepted or destroyed based upon their conformance to the teachings of Paul.**

As have been already mentioned, we have already seen how "St. Paul" had all but totally obliterated the religion of Jesus based upon the authority of his alleged "vision". We then saw how his teachings were based more upon his personal philosophy and beliefs than any attempt to cite words or actions of Jesus himself. We further saw how he was later made the "majority author" of the New Testament and countless authentic gospels were burned and labeled "apocrypha" by his followers.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that where the authorship of the New Testament is concerned, it is shrouded in the mystery of assumptions by the attribution of the works to authors which are immediately disproved once the internal evidence is studied.

**Answer for yourself:** If the authors of the New Testament cannot be wholly traced to the works which are attributed to them, how could the New Testament stand to the scrutiny of being 'the Word of God'? **The question raises serious doubts about the legitimacy of "inspiration" behind the New Testament, as it is obviously the work of not only multiple hands, but unknown multiple hands.**

It is pretty clear that the 'original' reading of the New Testament books is not restored; Well, we do not know what the 'original' reading is at the first place. The closest we can estimate is the First New Testament of Marcion in 140 C.E. The absurd claim that the Bible's literal text is restored to 99.8% is false. The comparative study of the critical editions show a mere 63% agreement of the variant free verses not taking into consideration the orthographical differences. As far as the claim that the Bible being the word of God and its inerrancy is concerned, the less we talk about it, the better. **This is because we do not have the 'original' text but myriad of imperfect, often divergent manuscripts from where the 'original' text has to be extracted by a committee of humans! Even worse, the 'best' reading is decided by voting!! It is safe to say that we neither have Original Text nor its faithful restoration. This holds true for Textus Receptus (i.e., the Received Text) of the New Testament.**



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# THE TENSION BETWEEN ALLEGORICAL GNOSTICISM AND THE LITERALISM OF LATER EMERGING WESTERN CHRISTIANITY

Let us never forget that religious movements tend to embrace two opposing poles, which I call "Allegorical Gnosticism" and "Literalism", with particular individuals inhabiting the whole spectrum between the two extremes. This classification is important because Gnostics from different religious traditions (Gentile and Jewish) have far more in common with each other than they do with the Literalists within their own tradition. While Literalists from different religions clearly hold conflicting beliefs, Gnostics from all traditions use different conceptual vocabularies to articulate a common understanding. When this "literalized" form of Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the brutal Roman Empire, the original mysticism of the followers of Jesus was distorted almost beyond recognition and formed into dogmatic creeds of what was to become the "imitation church." When this "literalized" form of Christianity was adopted by Rome at its official religion the original Christians and followers of Jesus were violently suppressed, their scriptures burned and their memory all but erased by the fires of Rome. The Roman Church fabricated its own account of the origins of Christianity, still believed today, which dismisses the first Christians as a minor cult of obscure heretics. Western Christianity would win the war both with Israel and the Jews; both theologically and militarily. With this comes a "New Divine Revelation" from Roman pens which challenges and replaces the wisdom and religious beliefs of the Jews which existed over two thousand years ago and beyond as far back as Egypt. Sadly Western Christianity will triumph over the "Gnosis" of the ancients and Judaism; the religion of the historical Jesus. Soon Rome is re-interpreting existing "religious allegories" in a "literal" sense and creating their own religious literature (the New Testament) in response to existing Gnostic religious writings which will tell the world a story about a "Literal Divine Christ" which is untrue to both the existing Gnostic understanding of God as well as His "Christ." This website is the story about the Roman re-interpretation of these prior religious beliefs and understandings of God (Gnosticism and Judaism) which finds ultimate expression in the Roman New Testament.

The sad reality that faces such a student who undertakes such a serious study of the New Testament is that you will see that much that you have been "literally" taught and accepted most of your Christian life from the pages of this New Testament is the false "reinterpretation" of Divine Truths best explained and understood when left as "allegory" and "myth." You will see that most of Christian sacred doctrines has little in common with the Yeshua [Jesus] of history and his faith in God as Jew. Such hatred of the Jew and his Torah [Law] by the early Gentile and Roman Church has spawned the greatest cover-up of previously existing Divine Truth in the history of mankind; the truth concerning the Jesus of history and the expected Jewish Messiah. In the place of the Jewish Messiah we have been sold "Christ of Faith" of Rome's making. When this "Christ of Faith" is "literalized" then we encounter the counterfeit and lose the intended meaning once held by the ancients. We can lay the blame for our misunderstanding today squarely upon the New Testament which is a mixture of "theologies" that overlap and present a blurred and distorted vision not only of the Jewish Messiah but the Jesus of history as well. It is time someone deal with these issues and sorts this out for the average reader. By God's help I plan on doing just that.



## QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS BEFORE WE PUT OUR FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- How did the New Testament itself as a collection of writings come into being and what were the factors behind it?
- Why the need for a New Testament anyway since salvation was already available to the Jew and Gentile in their respective Covenants with God?
- Who collected the writings which were to be included in the New Testament, and on what principles?
- What was the religious belief and religious belief system of the person who first saw the need for a New Testament and who gave us the "FIRST" New Testament?
- How did this religious belief system of the originator of the "FIRST" New Testament differ from the religious belief system of James & the Jerusalem Church & Jesus?
- Who found it necessary to respond to this "FIRST" New Testament with a "SECOND" New Testament that contradicted and corrected this prior one in many places and who was he?
- What was the motives of the writer of the "SECOND" New Testament and where did these other books come from which were not previously available to the first collector?
- Were there new "theologies" added in subsequent additions to the "FIRST" New Testaments and how did the "theologies" differ and change from what the Jewish Church and Jesus believed?
- What "replacement religious" doctrines can be discerned and seen in the "SECOND" New Testament writings and later collections of supplements which were later added to existing prior "New Testaments"?
- What circumstances led to the fixing of a list, or canon, of authoritative books?
- What religious beliefs were lost from "the faith once given to the Saints" by the "literalization" of prior allegorical religious beliefs held by the Gnostics and the Jews?

This is not going to be an easy or a quick study. The answers to these questions as well as many other we will encounter on this website will be only discerned by historical research. Our object is to find out what historical research reveals about the origin of the New Testament canon and the earliest meanings of "the Christ" as held by the earliest followers of Jesus before Rome corrupted such concepts in the second and later centuries.



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# EARLY CHRISTIANITY & THE STRUGGLE FOR ORTHODOXY

Christianity in the second and third centuries was in a remarkable state of flux. That is not surprising because at point in its history has the religion constituted or presented a unity of faith in spite of the fact that the New Testament speaks about it:

*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (KJV)*

## EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND ITS THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Nowhere is this theological disunity in Christianity seen more clearly than in the realm of theology. I am speaking specifically of the **host of different interpretations concerning "the Christ."** In the second and third centuries there were, of course, Christians who believed in only one God; others, however, claimed that there were two Gods; yet others subscribed to 30, or 365, or more. Some Christians accepted the Hebrew Scriptures as a revelation of the one true God, the sacred possession of all believers; others claimed that the Scriptures had been inspired by an evil deity. Some Christians believed that God had created the world and was soon going to redeem it; others said that God neither had created the world nor had ever had any dealings with it. Some Christians believed that Christ was somehow both a man and God; others said that he was a man, but not God others claimed that he was God, but not a man; others insisted that he was a man who had been temporarily inhabited by God. Some believed that "the Christ" had entered Jesus at his baptism while others believed that Jesus had pre-existed. Some believed that Jesus was fully human while others believed that he was the earthly manifestation of "the Christ" among men. Some Christians believe that Christ's death had brought about the salvation of the world; others claimed that his death had no bearing on salvation; yet others alleged that he had never even died. And then there were Jews who were hoping in a human messiah to redeem Israel from the persecution of the Gentiles. There were even small sects of Jews that saw the messiah as a Cosmic-Godman like the Essenes. Notice that basically we have two concepts before us: human or God. We have before us only two choices: a human Jesus and a human possessing "the Christ" or God incarnated in the form of a man or God manifested as "the Christ" among mankind.

**Answer for yourself:** So who is right? What were the beliefs in these areas of the people and person representing them that gave us the First New Testament?

Well that is what we have to find out.

We need to know right from the start that few of these variant theologies went uncontested, and the theological controversies between them that ensued over the following centuries impacted the surviving literature on virtually every level. We are confronted with an evolving Christian Scripture; one that would eventually be called the New Testament. The New Testament manuscripts were not produced impersonally by machines capable of flawless reproduction. **These New Testament manuscripts were copied by hand, by living.**



**breathing human beings who were deeply rooted in the conditions and the theological controversies of their day.**

**Answer for yourself:** It is possible or likely that the existing theological dissensions and the existing religious beliefs of the sect from which these scribes and copyists came have exerted an influence in the way they transcribed their sacred Scriptures?

**This website is devoted to the premise that these theological disputes of the early centuries of Christianity, specifically disputes over Christology, prompted Christian scribes to alter the words of Scripture in the New Testament to reflect their beliefs; thereby creating a "Divine authority" for their group and their group's religious ideas and beliefs and making such a document "the" standard to be used in all debates and controversies.**

**Answer for yourself:** Who could forcibly put forth their religious beliefs with any hope of success when they lacked such a Divine Book as this New Testament? *The problem is as we shall soon see is that this New Testament of the later second through fifth century is not the same as the one from 140 C.E. in the early second century. It has been changed theologically; specifically in the areas of "Christology."*

Scribes modified their manuscripts to make them more patently "orthodox" and less susceptible to "abuse" by the opponents of orthodoxy. Theological controversies of the second and third centuries prompted this altering of the First New Testament by proto-Roman Catholics. We find these theological controversies being carried out in the literary realm. The contest for religious authority and doctrinal supremacy is waged on the pages of the New Testament. Ironically we find that what was once "orthodoxy" is now "heresy" and what was once "heresy" is now "orthodoxy." **Orthodoxy will be established over these earliest centuries of Christianity by the winners of these theological debates and those who controlled the writing of this evolutionary New Testament.**

## **ORTHODOXY AND HERESY...WHO DECIDES?**

During its first two and a half centuries, Christianity comprised a number of competing theologies, or better, a number of competing Christian groups advocating a variety of theologies. Unity of the faith did not exist. **During these early centuries of Christianity there was as yet no established "orthodoxy," that is, no basic theological system acknowledged by the majority of church leaders and laity.** Different geographical regions and different local churches supported different understandings of the religion, of "the Christ," while different understandings of the religion and "the Christ" were present even within the same local church. Evidence for this diversity of early Christianity has been steadily mounting only in this present century due to the discovery of such things like the Nag Hammadi library of Gnostic writings as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls. These recent discoveries have reshaped our view of early Christianity and brought into question the Roman tradition of the Christian faith as handed down by them through tradition and their writings. We now know that Christianity of the earliest centuries displayed widespread diversity.

## **EUSEBIUS DEFINES "ORTHODOXY" AND "HERESY"...PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

Historians of early Christianity have been inclined to see such diversity within early Christianity. To the contrary, such a shift in perspective of early Christianity represents a distinctive shift in thinking, effected only in relatively recent times. Prior to the beginning of this century, virtually all investigators were influenced by the histories of early Christianity produced by Roman Catholicism during the early centuries. Particularly influential was the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, the fourth-century bishop of Caesarea and so-called "father of church history," whose work set the tone for Christian historiography for ages to come.

**The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (300 C.E.) has exerted a tremendous influence down through history.** In it Eusebius presents a picture of the church as being God driven and directed through the centuries and the theological controversies that she had to face. Eusebius leaves the strong impression that the Church has a mission and message from God as the "new Israel." According to Eusebius God was directing the church's mission and destiny. Eusebius paints a picture of a church that is controlled and sustained by God's spirit; one who faced persecution and grew despite opposition, and one that overcame "heresy" by a teaching that was labeled "apostolic" by Eusebius. It is this "apostolic teaching" of the church that was by definition "orthodox" (in that it was "right"). It is in Eusebius' defining of what is accepted church doctrine in his day (early 4th century) that he sets in stone for the church for all time their definition of what constitutes "orthodoxy" and "heresy."

Writing before the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. in which the Arian controversy (Christology) found an initial resolution, and well in advance of the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.), best known likewise for its statement of Christology, Eusebius defines for the Roman Church what is meant by "orthodox" Christianity: he makes it appear that this "orthodoxy" IS the kind of belief that exists in his day which, according to Eusebius, was ALSO preached by the apostles and their followers from the beginning.

**Answer for yourself:** But was the Christianity of the early 4th century like the "Christianity" of the early first and second centuries and the earliest followers of "the Christ"?

Eusebius defines as "evil" all major deviations from accepted Catholic doctrine in his day. Those who held different opinion and beliefs concerning the deity of Christ, or the unity of the Godhead were stigmatized as "evil" and influenced by the devil and his demons in order to try to corrupt the faith proclaimed by the apostles of Jesus. Especially characteristic of Eusebius is the venom used in characterizing those opposing opposite beliefs from the "accepted" religious beliefs of Rome in that day. (e.g., Hist. Eccl. II, 14, 1-3; III, 26-27; IV, 7, 1-3).

Such treatment of other Christian believers with different views than those enforced or promoted by Rome with such hatred and venom helps us understand the nature of Christian heresy, and it is this basic conceptualization that proved so influential "heretics" with different beliefs about "the Christ") for the traditional assessment of the development of Christian doctrine. The "classical" view of orthodoxy and heresy formalizes this basic understanding. Rome will set the stage for what all others were to believe from the early 4th century. For Rome "orthodoxy" (literally meaning "right opinion") represented, according to them, the teachings advocated by Jesus and his apostles which spread throughout the world by Christians of the first generation, and attested by the vast majority of believers in all periods.

**Answer for yourself:** But is this actually true? Are the beliefs of the early 4th century accurately reflective of the earliest beliefs of the earliest Christians and followers of "the Christ" in the first and early second century?

For Eusebius those who claim to be Christian but who deny any point of this teaching, or who modify it in any significant way, represent "heresy" (literally meaning "choice"), because they have willfully chosen to misrepresent or deny the truth. Heresy, then, is always secondary to the truth and derived from it by a kind of corruption or perversion. For Christian polemicists, such perversions are the minority opinion of depraved individuals. For Eusebius and Rome heresy represents a contamination of the original teachings of Christianity by ideas drawn from the outside, either from Jewish circles or from the teachings of pagan philosophers.

## **BUT BEFORE EUSEBIUS THERE WERE OTHER HERESY HUNTERS**

**Although Eusebius was certainly responsible for popularizing these views, he by no means invented them.** To the contrary, he self-consciously placed himself within a stream of tradition that runs back through a series of earlier writers that he and his orthodox associates embraced as their own theological forebears, writers such as Origen, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Justin. Interestingly, the basic understanding of orthodoxy and heresy found among these forefathers of orthodoxy can be traced all the way



back to the first century, to the oldest surviving account of Christianity's early years, the New Testament book of Acts.

To be sure, Acts is concerned less with the relationship of theological divergences within early Christianity than with the dissemination of the religion itself. The term "orthodoxy" does not occur here, and "heresy" lacks any pejorative sense, meaning simply "sect." But undergirding Acts' narrative are notions that proved particularly amenable to the classical understanding of orthodoxy and heresy. Here, again in passages that have come down through history through Rome, the true faith is to be believed to be based on the eyewitness accounts of the apostles, who execute their mission to spread this faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic churches are pictured in complete harmony with one another-even latecomers such as Paul seem to agree with Jesus' original followers on every important point of doctrine and practice. It is true that even here difficulties arise within the Christian communities. But these derive from the greed and avarice of their individual members (5:1- 11), or from the thirst for power of those who come to infiltrate their midst (8:4-25). We are given a picture in Acts that the vast majority of converts remain true to the apostolic message, and theological issues are readily resolved by an appeal to apostolic authority, which in every case-even after serious debate and reflection-reveals the most remarkable of all unities (15:1-29). Disunities can be attributed to "false teachings," that is, to deviations from the theological views of Jesus' own apostles. Such deviations are the perverse doings of degenerate individuals, wolves who infiltrate the flock of sheep to do great damage, but who cannot, ultimately, overcome a church unified behind the original apostolic teaching (10:28-31).

**Answer for yourself:** But again is this an accurate picture of early Christianity and an accurate understanding of the events that transpired? Was Christianity a "unity" in this time period as we are led to believe by the Book of Acts?

This is the picture of apostolic Christianity that has come down to us by Roman hands and the Roman Second New Testament. Given this picture in the book of Acts along with the Roman adulteration of the First New Testament of Marcion whereby the earliest beliefs of "the Christ" were altered then it becomes an almost impossible task for us to come to the real truth about the religious beliefs of the first century if we use "only" the New Testament for our sources. We have to study "outside the box" and let the discoveries of archeology in these last two centuries especially shed it light on this problem if we ever hope to come to the truth concerning "the Christ" let alone the Jewish Messiah. We can no longer let a refutation of the earliest beliefs of the earliest Christians, both Jew and Gentile, as we have today in the Second New Testament keep us from these truths. Eusebius was the turning point for "orthodoxy" when he painted for all time and mankind the picture of "orthodoxy" for the rest of history; the problem is if his interpretation of prior religious beliefs were correct and if it was a mirror image of what the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus believed about "the Christ." I will show you in this website that it is not and that today we are misled by our New Testaments in matters concerning not only "the Christ" but the Jewish Messiah as well. Without taking advantage of these recent discoveries in these last two hundred years and especially since Nag Hammadi and the Dead Sea Scrolls then we are prone to fall into the trap of believing men like Eusebius who made sure that the current Roman religious views were to become the normative way of understanding the development of Christian theology down to the modern age.



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# THE CHALLENGE OF WALTER BAUER UPON THE UNITY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY & PRESUMED "ORTHODOXY"

Christianity has existed under the Eusebius' influence and his defining of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" for almost 1800 year today. But in 1934 this traditional understanding of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" will be severely challenged with the publication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, which is possibly the most significant book on early Christianity written in modern times. Bauer maintained:

- That the early Christian church in fact did not comprise a single orthodoxy from which emerged a variety of competing heretical minorities.
- Instead, early Christianity embodied a number of divergent forms, no one of which represented the clear and powerful majority of believers against all others.
- In some regions, what was later to be termed "heresy" was in fact the original and the only form of Christianity.
- In other regions, views later deemed heretical coexisted with views that would come to be embraced by the church as a whole, with most believers not drawing hard and fast lines of demarcation between the competing views.
- To this extent, "orthodoxy," in the sense of a unified group advocating an apostolic doctrine accepted by the majority of Christians everywhere, did not exist in the second and third centuries!
- Beliefs that were, at later times, embraced as orthodoxy and condemned as heresy were in fact competing interpretations of Christianity, one of which eventually (but not initially) acquired domination because of singular historical and social forces. Only when one social group had exerted itself sufficiently over the rest of Christendom did a "majority" opinion emerge; only then did the "right belief" represent the view of the Christian church at large (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption Of Scripture, Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, p. 7-9).

Bauer's findings, and for most subsequent scholars, clearly demonstrates, that orthodoxy and heresy can no longer be taken to mean either what their etymologies suggest or what they traditionally have implied as determined by Eusebius and others who adopted his definitions of the terms in his Ecclesiastical History. Bauer, in his work, does not assume that orthodoxy refers to "right beliefs" and heresy to "willful misbeliefs." Bauer uses the terms "orthodoxy" to refer to social groups, namely, the party that eventually established dominance over the rest of Christendom (orthodoxy) and the individuals and the term "heresies" to refer to groups that expressed alternative theological views. It was not for Bauer a case of who was right and who was wrong. Bauer came to see what was indeed true; namely, that the terms "orthodoxy" came in time to refer to the form of Christianity that eventually became dominant and "heresy" to refer to everything else.



**Answer for yourself:** Need I remind you that Rome will win these theological wars?

**Winners of wars and battles have always rewritten history and reinterpreted it for the world from their vantage point and perspective and Bauer traces this influence back to the first-century letter of I Clement of Rome.** In doing so, Bauer make no intimation as to which group was right or which groups were wrong), and does not embrace the traditional notion that the dominant group who claimed "orthodoxy" can do so based upon a truthful claim of historical priority. Again we find if we look that what at an earlier time was reflective of "orthodoxy" becomes "heresy" under the power and pens of Rome.

**Bauer demonstrated that contrary to the reports of Eusebius, the earliest and/or predominant forms of Christianity that existed in various areas of Christendom like Egypt, for example, were later deemed as "heretical" or were considered forms subsequently condemned by the victorious party which we all know to be Rome.** To be sure, Christians advocating views later embraced by fourth-century orthodoxy in Rome could be found scattered throughout these regions (a literal interpretation of "the Christ" and not an allegorical understanding of "the Christ", **but in most cases they represented a minority position!!!**

**Answer for yourself:** Why was that? Well you see Pharaohs were understood to be the representative of God in the world; literally they were thought of in Egypt as the "Son of Ra." We call it today the "Son of God." But "literally" they were not so "literally" but only "allegorically." So we find in Egypt in the earliest records left us on this planet that teach a Cosmology that is "allegorical" and not "literal" **and those who would go the "literal" way were way back then understood as having departed from normative understanding of God.** They would be, in Bauer's terminology, be classified by other Egyptians as "heretics." **One has to invest a considerable amount of time to understand Egyptian religion correctly to see these concepts correctly which we yet speak of today such as: Messiah, Christ, Logos, etc., for they all began there and we find their truest expression of their meaning as taught by the originators of these religions concepts in the beginning.** I recommend Gustaffa Madalla and his books for those interested in reading and learning of what I just said. If you do so then you will be well equipped to see how these concepts travel down through history and the changes made to them and this is especially important when we come to New Testament studies as that they are applied to Jesus. We need to understand them correctly and how the ancients viewed "the Christ" and Jesus which is almost impossible to know today when reading our inherited New Testaments which Rome forged.

**Bauer recognized, of course, that most of the writings surviving the conflict between ancient "orthodoxy" and later "orthodoxy" of Rome attest this later understanding of the Roman viewpoint of what should constitute "orthodoxy."** But this is not at all due to the fact, which is no longer seen as a fact, that they are broadly representative of beginning Christian opinion. It is rather due to the "accident" of their preservation. **It is the winners who write the history and destroy what they disagree with: later proponents of orthodoxy (i.e., the victors..Rome) preserved the writings of their theological forebears and insisted that they represented the opinion of the majority of Christians from apostolic times (regardless of whether they did or not).**

**Answer for yourself:** How, though, did this one form of Christianity, the form that came to influence all major branches of Christendom down to the present day, the form responsible for the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, for Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism-attain such a level of dominance?

## ROME WINS

**For Bauer this was the kind of Christianity found predominantly in the church of Rome, a church that had always used its superior administrative prowess and its vast material resources to influence other Christian communities.** Among other things, **the Roman church urged a hierarchical structure on other churches-the monarchical episcopate-which, given the right bishop, could persuade the majority**

of church members to adopt certain perspectives. And to some degree the Roman influence was purely economic: Roman slavery and the purchase of prisoners brought large numbers into their fold, while the judicious use of gifts and alms effected a generally sympathetic hearing of their views. It should be noted that Marcion was excommunicated from the Roman Church, apparently in the mid 140s C.E.. It was at this SAME time that Justin Martyr was active there, and that Irenaeus locates the center of theological orthodoxy in Rome (Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. III, 3.2).

The authority of Rome's theology developed during the last half of the second century and the beginning of the third century. Many feel that Roman theology developed out of the necessity afforded by the presence of so many diversified forms of the Christian faith out there and under the impetus of the such popular figures of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption Of Scripture, Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, p. 34-35).

Bart Ehrman makes note of the fact that Bauer believes that if anything, early Christianity was even more diversified than Bauer realized, and contrary to his opinion, we do not need to wait for the second century to begin painting this picture. What later came to be known as orthodoxy was simply one among a number of competing interpretations of Christianity in the early period. It was neither a self-evident interpretation nor an original apostolic view. No Apostle, for example, described Jesus in Nicene terms as "begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father...who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnated from the virgin Mary" (Ibid.)

**Answer for yourself:** Was the Apostle's creed crafted by Rome to counter the Ancient understanding of "the Christ" which was an allegorical understanding of "the Christ" and which was espoused by both Gnostics and the Apostles when they understood Jesus? Yes!

What came to be called "The Apostles' Creed" - the oldest confession of faith - appears to have been formulated around the year 150 AD, and probably originated in Rome. The beliefs stated in the "Apostle's Creed" it seem to have been carefully defined in order to counteract Gnosticism. The

- Gnostics denied a Divine act of Creation. So, in the Creed, there is the statement, "I believe in one God, who made heaven and earth."
- Against the Docetic conception of Christ, is the stated belief, "Christ Jesus, Son of God, was made flesh for our Salvation."
- To counteract the mystical, subjective tendencies of the Gnostics, there was the affirmation that Christ suffered and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, thus declaring the Saviour to be a person who lived on earth in historical time.
- And to exclude the belief in the evil of matter, and so in a purely spiritual Resurrection, Catechumens answered that they believed in the Resurrection of the Body, and that Christ would come to judge the living and the dead.

It is possible that, had the "orthodox" Church not felt the need to defend Christian teaching from Gnosticism, the Creed would not have been formulated in that particular way.

As far back as New Testament times, Christianity was remarkably varied in its theological expressions, with the diversity of the New Testament becoming manifest yet more clearly in the diversity of the second and third centuries, when competing groups embraced a wide range of conflicting theologies, and fixed lines of demarcation were not recognized by most.



**So W. Bauer has done a wonderful job restoring not only the truth concerning the theological diversity regarding "the Christ" of the early Christian centuries but has as well shown us how the earliest beliefs concerning "the Christ", which were once held by the earliest Christians, was later considered "heresy" by Rome in their rejection of the Gnostic "Christ."**



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# DID THE EARLY CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES AFFECT THE SCRIBES THAT TRANSMITTED THE NEW TESTAMENT?

**Answer for yourself:** Did the early Christological controversies affect the scribes that transmitted the New Testament?

Well let us examine the evidence we have at hand and what scholars tell us today and determine the truth of the matter.

That Christianity of the earliest centuries was a diverse expressions of religious beliefs concerning everything from "salvation" to "the Christ" is abundantly attested in our early sources, many of which lament the fact of such theological diversity and speak of it as a despicable state of affairs. Warnings against "heterodox", "sectarian", "schismatic", "dissident", and "heretical" views saturate the pages of the books later canonized as the New Testament, both from circles that were associated with Paul, and those that were not. I have for many years now be able to see the New Testament as a collection of various "theologies" which are sadly written on top of one another and this goes without notice by all but those with sufficient theological knowledge to spot such a situation and a critical eye towards the texts. In fact there are two different "salvation" messages in the New Testament and both conflict with each other. It might surprise you when you examine this for yourself but the salvation message of Jesus/Yeshua is completely different from the salvation message of Paul. We find when we study Paul that Paul gave us in the New Testament a unique synthesis of Gnosticism, Mystery Religions, and Judaism for "my gospel" of which he speaks.

Rom 16:25 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (KJV)

I don't expect you to recognize it now but in many of Paul's writings "key" Gnostic terminology and concepts just jump out at you if you have sufficient knowledge of Gnosticism to spot it when you read Pauline writings. Above we find "key" Gnostic ideas and words in Paul's early epistle to Rome where, as a typical Gnostic would say, he mentions the "revelation of the **mystery**" which is unique to Paul as his special "gnosis" or knowledge which is "his gospel" which only he has that others are not privy to. This is typical Gnosticism when salvation comes through knowledge and Paul spread a Gospel that was unknown to normative Judaism and this is just one reason why Torah observant Jews could not receive Paul's "gospel" let alone his "messiah" which was totally foreign to normative Judaism. Now let us move on.

**Answer for yourself:** Would you think about that for a minute? How could one document, the current New Testament, consist of writings that supported Paul and his camp and yet warn of "heterodox" and "heretical" views while at the same time also contain as well warnings of "heterodox" and "heretical" views from the camp of the opponents of Paul? THINK?

The answer is rather simple really. The current New Testament is a document built upon an earlier New



**Testament which espoused a different understanding of "the Christ" and "salvation" which has through alterations, additions, an deletions, and pure inventions has been made over centuries to reflect opposing views of "the Christ" and "salvation" and these conflicting theologies are mixed together in such a way that only those with sufficient knowledge and a trained eye can notice one from the other (when the text is to be understood "allegorically" and when the text is to be understood "literally." This is so very important to understand in our study. Said another way earlier "allegorical" understandings of God, salvation, and "the Christ" have been modified by the addition of other materials whereby the ancient "allegorical" interpretations are today accepted as if "literal."**

Ant-Gnostic material (the Pastoral Epistles for example which is attributed to Paul) will later be added to the already existing First New Testament given us by the Gnostic Marcion in 140 C.E. in order to make it appear that Paul, whom the Gnostic Marcion held to be the only one who truly understood correctly the message of "Christ", was professing beliefs in a human Jesus Christ. We see clearly today that "the Christ" of whom Paul spoke in the First New Testament of Marcion is a completely different "Jesus Christ" which we encounter in the later Second New Testament and the later letters and epistles that carry Paul's name. All we have to do is know Gnosticism well and then compare line upon line and precept upon precept the earliest Pauline writings in the First New Testament with those carrying his name in the Second New Testament to see the creation of a "fleshly" Christ which did not exist for Paul in his earliest letters. Paul you see was a Gnostic just like Marcion and we continue to prove this fact in our website. So I ask you again:

**Answer for yourself:** Did the early Christological controversies affect the scribes that transmitted the New Testament? You bet it did and we will continue to see this as we study and learn.

So too, the writings of the so-called "church fathers" (i.e., the early writers later embraced by orthodox authors of the fourth century and later) are dominated by anti-heretical concerns (from their viewpoints), from the occasional epistles of Ignatius in the second century, who on his way to martyrdom warns the churches of Asia Minor against Judaizing and **Docetic kinds of Christians**, through a range of such heresiologists as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus, who devote prodigious amounts of energy to refuting individuals and groups that propound unpalatable ideas.

We need to take a second an try to understand these Docetists and how they understood Jesus and "the Christ." Most of the heretical literature (in the mind of Rome) of the second century was produced by the Docetic sects. They are called Docetic because they asserted that the **Lord only seemed (Greek, docein) to have a body of flesh, but that he was entirely a spirit being, like the angels.** They made this assertion because they, like other Gnostics, believed that material things were necessarily corrupt (matter, flesh), and that matter itself was either illusory or always at odds with spiritual realities (the war of the flesh vs the spirit). **The Docetists saw Jesus only as a divine revealer of spiritual truths, and believed that salvation was attained by those few who were able to understand his mysterious teachings and actions; they believed in a spiritual resurrection through the attainment of wisdom. When this system of doctrine came to its fullest expression in the second century it became known as Gnosticism.**

The point is not that these familiar authors and heresiologists such as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus evidence the predominance of the orthodox view. It is rather that **they demonstrate the existence of rival groups at every turn, in virtually every region of Christendom of which they, and we, have knowledge** (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption Of Scripture, Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, p. 9).

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GNOSTIC NAG HAMMADI MANUSCRIPTS**

Again let us not be put off by the use of the term "heretical" as will be used in this website. "Heretical" we must come to realize does not necessarily mean "wrong" but only "different." The Nag Hammadi Library, a collection of thirteen ancient codices containing over fifty texts, was discovered in upper Egypt in 1945. This immensely important discovery includes a large number of primary Gnostic scriptures -- **texts once thought**



to have been entirely destroyed during the early Christian struggle to define "orthodoxy" -- scriptures such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Truth.

The spectacular discoveries of heretical writings during the present century have confirmed the existence of such groups and clarified some of their theological characteristics. Understand the earliest understanding of "the Christ" and its relationship to Jesus are not the current ones we hear today as taught from the tradition of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. One would naturally not expect the victors of the struggle (Rome) to reproduce the literature of their opponents. And indeed they by and large did not, except in excerpts that they quoted simply for purposes of refutation. This means that prior to such fortuitous findings as the library of Gnostic writings uncovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945, our understanding of heterodox Christianity was necessarily one-sided. This simply means Rome wins because they destroyed all the evidence to the contrary that possibly their Roman religious beliefs which rejected the allegorical understandings of the Ancients and "the Christ" were actually "heresy." If you destroy all the writings from the opposing theological positions and burn all the libraries of the world except you own then you win by default for in just one to two generations people will no longer remember the truth and accept the lie as "orthodoxy." This is exactly what happened.. Rome would retrain the world through power and money that in all actuality their beliefs were the true "orthodoxy." They are not!

These tractates from the pens of heresiologists such as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus demonstrate that the "sects" to which the heresiologists assigned various Gnostics represent the characterization of outsiders. In many respects, the Gnostics we now know from primary sources from the finds at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945, are quite different from those described in theological terms by the anti-Gnostic orthodox fathers. But with this discovery we now have firsthand information about the beliefs and, to a lesser extent, the practices of one or more variant forms of Christianity. Of utmost interest we find among the Nag Hammadi tractates that some of them engage in polemics and argue against heretical tendencies of other groups, including the group that eventually acquired dominance-that is, the "orthodox" Christians themselves which later develop in Rome as Roman Catholicism with their "literal" understanding of "the Christ". Thus, the common notion that heresy was always on the run, always assuming a defensive posture, as presented in the writings of such heresiologists as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus has now had to be revised. I have said it before and will say it again: "Winners write history and Rome won"! Amazingly in my studies I saw clearly that the earliest Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, who understood "the Christ" allegorically and its relationship to Jesus would later be labeled as "heretics" by Rome as early as the early second century with Ignatius. Others will follow in his footsteps such as Justin and Irenaeus. Groups later labeled heretical saw themselves as orthodox (holding the "right beliefs") and sometimes attacked groups that held views they themselves considered aberrant.

## WHERE ARE THE THEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES?

It may appear somewhat incongruous that a world of such intense polemic produced few lines of demarcation to differentiate the positions of the various groups. This is nonetheless another clearly attested feature of the period. This is not to say that battle lines were *never* drawn. Polemical confrontations by their very nature require some evaluation of the differences between oneself and one's opponents. In particular, specific differences of opinion emerged in the area of Christology, the area of our most immediate concern. At the same time, the sources clearly show that prior to the establishment of a rigid orthodoxy, with its highly nuanced understanding of the faith, there was a broad tract of undefined territory between theological positions that to us might appear quite disparate. In some measure, the absence of clear boundary lines explains Irenaeus's famous lament that Gnostic Christians proved so difficult to uproot from the church because they were far from easy to locate and differentiate from simple believers. To a large degree, of course, the problem of detection resulted from a peculiarity of Gnostic Christians: as we shall see, Gnostic Christians had no qualms about professing beliefs espoused by other Christians, while assigning to



them a deeper meaning that, to the literally minded Irenaeus and his constituency, proved tantamount to denying them.

**Answer for yourself:** Was this the "mystery" that Paul talks about?

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

Here we go again. We see these "key" words again typical of Gnostics: "make known" (something secret), "mystery," and the ultimate concept; "Christ in you."

**Answer for yourself:** Now Paul was talking to living and breathing individuals. Then was Paul simply talking of being resurrected from a fleshly death of spiritual dullness and darkness and awakening to the revelation that God lives in you...that we as human beings are really His temple; that we all together as God's creation comprise one whole "body" of "Christ" or "God's Consciousness" through His "Christ" (an intermediary between God, pure Spirit, and matter (flesh)? Yes he was and again we get a glimpse of a non-human Christ and Jesus Christ.

**Answer for yourself:** Do we dare even think that the earliest Pauline epistles and Marcion's gospel which teach of a non-human Christ, as they existed before later Roman editing with Irenaeus in 180 C.E., espoused an appearance among mankind in the fullness of time of a visitation of God among men in the form of a Docetic Christ which only appeared to mankind in the "form" of man? Could these earliest believers, following in the footsteps of the Ancients since Egypt, have understood and experience God more accurately than we have today? Has Rome's alteration and forgery of the First New Testament of Marcion concealed these understandings of "the Christ" from us today?

But on another level the Gnostics could not readily be detected because many of the things they believed had not yet been pronounced as aberrant by any generally recognized authority. Irenaeus, in 180 C.E., was, in a sense, breaking new ground, although he had predecessors such as Ignatius and Justin Martyr (Adv. Haer. IV, pref. 2).

The general absence of theological precision in the period can help explain why writers who were later embraced as forerunners of orthodoxy espoused views that look remarkably heretical.

I am sure many of you have heard about Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

Clement was a Christian Apologist, missionary theologian to the Greek cultural world, and second known leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He synthesized Greek philosophy and Mosaic tradition, and attempted to mediate Gnostics and orthodox Christians. He attacked Gnosticism, but he himself has been called a Christian Gnostic. Although Clement remained entirely orthodox, in his writing he strove to state the faith in terms of contemporary thought.

Among ante-Nicene writers of the Eastern Church, the greatest by far was Origen, both as a theologian and as a prolific Biblical scholar. According to Eusebius, Origen was born of Christian parents in Egypt, probably about 185, and spent most of his life in Alexandria as a teacher, but he also visited Antioch, Athens, Arabia, Ephesus, and Rome, and lived for a rather long period at Caesarea in Palestine. In the year 203 Origen was appointed by Demetrius, the bishop, to succeed Clement as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria. For a dozen years he carried on that work with marked success and with increasing numbers of pupils at the school.

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that both of these early Christian giants acknowledged that Jesus' body could readily change appearance at will - a decidedly Docetic notion - with Clement claiming that Jesus

ingested food not for nourishment but simply to **convince his followers that he actually had a body?**

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch that? Many of the earliest Christian believers and followers of Jesus did not believe that he had a body!!! Such again is Gnosticism who interpreted "the Christ" allegorically but Rome will win and counter these belief by corrupting the First New Testament and out comes a "Christ/human" in the form of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this the reason why we don't find outside of this one book given to us by Rome, our current New Testament, of any explicit evidence or reference in all the prolific writings of the first century, both Jewish and Gentile, that mentions Jesus of Nazareth as a human being? I will let you figure that out as I struggle with this fact yet today.

**Answer for yourself:** But does not Josephus mention Jesus? **You need to read the article to decide if accounts in Josephus was forged just like the earlier New Testament.**

**Such divergent views concerning "the Christ" were difficult to construe as either orthodox or heretical in the late second century, as the requisite boundary lines had not in every case been clearly drawn.** Rome will do this in time. When, at a later time, they were drawn, even such "champions of orthodoxy" as Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and, especially, Origen, fell under the strictures of the party they had helped establish.

- Origen in his lifetime was often attacked, suspected of adulterating the Gospel with pagan philosophy. After his death, opposition steadily mounted. The chief accusations against Origen's teaching are the following:
  - **making the Son inferior to the Father and thus being a precursor of Arianism, a 4th-century heresy that denied that the Father and the Son were of the same substance;**
  - **spiritualizing away the resurrection of the body (typical of Gnosticism..."awake thou that sleepest" just like Paul said)**
  - **denying hell**
  - **a morally enervating universalism;**
  - **speculating about pre-existent souls and world cycles (just like Gnosticism)**
  - **dissolving redemptive history into timeless myth by using allegorical interpretation (just like Gnosticism)**
  - **thus turning Christianity into a kind of Gnosticism, a movement that held that matter was evil and the spirit good (just like Gnosticism).**
- Tertullian's decision to align himself with the Montanists was later seen as a fall from the true faith. Origen, a staunch advocate of orthodoxy in his day and probably the single most influential theologian between Paul and Augustine, came to be violently opposed by the fourth-century heresiologists Epiphanius (Panarion 64).
- **Clement of Alexandria attacked Gnosticism, but he himself has been called a Christian Gnostic.** Although Clement remained entirely orthodox, in his writing he strove to state the faith in terms of contemporary thought. He was long venerated as a saint, but Photius, in the 9th cent., regarded Clement as a heretic. Because of Photius's contentions the name of Clement was removed from the Roman martyrology.

The more nebulous context of their own day also explains why Christians of radically different theological persuasions could be actively involved in the life and worship of the same church. I have already mentioned Irenaeus's general complaints about the Gnostic Christians. We can also speak of specific instances: Valentinus, Ptolemy, and Justin were apparently all accepted as faithful members of the congregation in Rome, at approximately the same time.

**Nowhere are the blurred lines separating "acceptable" and "aberrant" beliefs more evident than in the "popular" Christian literature of the second and third centuries, literature, that is, that was written**



**for and read by general audiences not overly concerned with theological concerns.** This is why Christological affirmations made by second-and third-century Christians interested in theological "correctness" can appear so primitive by fourth-or fifth-century standards on the one hand, yet seem to be headed towards orthodoxy, with its paradoxical affirmations, on the other.

## THE NECESSITY OF A CREED TO DEFINE ORTHODOXY

The answer for this problem of conflicting theologies is to define what is and what is not "orthodoxy" and there was no better way to accomplish such a task than by creating a "creed."

Ignatius evidently considered his creed sufficiently nuanced to disallow the conceivable aberrations:

*There is one physician both fleshly and spiritual begotten and unbegotten, come in flesh, God, in death, true life, both of Mary and of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ, our Lord (Ign. Eph. 7, 2).*

Orthodox theologians of a later age would have viewed such a creed as hopelessly vague. But they will get better as we shall see in time as they are better thought out to express the accepted theology of the winners of these theological wars....Rome.

What came to be called "The Apostles' Creed" - the oldest confession of faith - appears to have been formulated around the year 150 AD, and probably originated in Rome. **The beliefs stated in the "Apostle's Creed" it seem to have been carefully defined in order to counteract Gnosticism.**

- The Gnostics denied a Divine act of Creation. So, in the Creed, there is the statement, "I believe in one God, who made heaven and earth."
- Against the Docetic conception of Christ, is the stated belief, "Christ Jesus, Son of God, was made flesh for our Salvation."
- To counteract the mystical, subjective tendencies of the Gnostics, there was the affirmation that Christ suffered and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, thus declaring the Saviour to be a person who lived on earth in historical time.
- And to exclude the belief in the evil of matter, and so in a purely spiritual Resurrection, Catechumens answered that they believed in the Resurrection of the Body, and that Christ would come to judge the living and the dead.

*It is possible that, had the "orthodox" Church not felt the need to defend Christian teaching from Gnosticism, the Creed would not have been formulated in that particular way.*



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## DEFINING "ORTHODOXY" & THE INTOLERANCE OF CONTRARY VIEWS & THE CHANGING OF THE SACRED TEXTS

We have already mentioned that contrary to what one might expect, the indistinct lines separating theological positions of early Christians do not at all suggest a generally tolerant attitude among the disparate groups. To be sure, some groups may have been tolerant, and many Christians no doubt were indifferent. But the surviving sources are permeated with just the opposite disposition-a kind of spirited intolerance of contrary views, matched only by that shown to nonbelieving Jews and pagans. Before the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity and the legal proscription of heresy, even before the earliest councils that were called to adjudicate among theological claims and to depose heretics from positions of authority, as far back in fact as our earliest sources go, we find Christians castigating others who similarly claim the name but differently interpret the religion. Furthermore, all of the intolerant parties appear certain of their own interpretations, which means among other things that every group understood itself to be orthodox (i.e., to subscribe to the "right beliefs") and every other group to be heretical.

**Answer for yourself:** Such a state of affairs is, of course, natural: when do persons of strong conviction ever believe themselves to be wrong?

**Answer for yourself:** We are driven, then, to the problematic character of our labels, the problem that confronted Bauer?

**Answer for yourself:** Are the labels "orthodoxy" and "heresy" appropriate for describing early Christian movements? Most scholars recognize that they cannot be used in their traditional sense, namely, to designate the true or original faith on the one hand and secondary aberrations from it on the other. At the same time-in essential agreement with Bauer against some of his detractors - the labels *can* retain their usefulness as descriptions of social and political realities, quite apart from their theological connotations. That is to say, they can serve as adequate descriptions of the group that eventually attained a level of dominance within the Christian tradition, and the multiplicity of groups that it overcame. For it is a historical fact that, owing to a variety of reasons, one group within early Christianity achieved social dominance and enforced its views on other groups that had supported divergent opinions. Looked at in sociohistorical terms, orthodoxy and heresy are concerned as much with struggles over power as with debates over ideas. Rome will win!

**Answer for yourself:** Is it appropriate, though, to apply these labels to the competing groups before one of them had attained a level of dominance?

**Answer for yourself:** Is it sensible to speak of Christian orthodoxy and heresy before the fourth century?

In one sense, of course, it is not. If the term orthodoxy means the dominant form of Christianity, then prior to its domination, the views of this group are scarcely orthodox. But even before the decisive events of the fourth century there were individual Christians who espoused views very similar to



those that came to dominate, and these writers of the second and third centuries were embraced by the later champions of orthodoxy as their own theological forebears. These forebears came to be quoted as authoritative sources for deciding theological issues, and were presented as true heirs of the apostolic tradition, as reliable tradents who passed along the doctrines of the faith from apostolic to Nicene times. Chief among these were such figures as:

- Ignatius of Antioch,
- Polycarp,
- Justin,
- Irenaeus,
- Tertullian,
- Hippolytus, and even
- Clement of Alexandria and
- Origen

The above writers' works were preserved by the victorious party in these Christological debates and it was these writers and their writings that continue today to influence students concerning "the" nature of Christianity after the New Testament period.

**Answer for yourself:** Given this state of affairs, how should these progenitors of the dominant party be labeled?

We may be somewhat loath to call them "orthodox," because, on the one hand, their positions had not yet attained a level of dominance, and, on the other, they themselves had not yet defined these positions with the degree of clarity that was later obtained. For this reason, we might best describe them as "proto-orthodox," or say that they represent a kind of "incipient orthodoxy." While these labels do indeed appear more accurate, they are after all merely labels - artificially constructed signifiers-and have the disadvantage of being somewhat cumbersome. I have chosen therefore to use the term orthodox interchangeably with these more accurate descriptions to denote the views that later came to a position of dominance in Christianity, and to apply the term heresy to positions adopted by competing parties. I do so fully cognizant of the caveats required by our discussion: these labels are not meant to denote either a theological approbation of the various positions or a historical assessment of the relative numerical superiority of their adherents.

Moreover, by grouping together these early representatives of orthodoxy, these proto-orthodox Christians, I do not mean to say that they attest either a monolithic theology among themselves or a perfect theological continuity with the representatives of fourth-century orthodoxy. If you remember we have already looked at both the ambiguity of Ignatius's theology and the final condemnation of Origen's. At the same time, there are certain points of continuity among these thinkers and clear lines of development that move toward the fourth century.

It is striking that the lines of continuity are sometimes seen more clearly in what these writers *reject* than in what they *affirm*. Nowhere is this more conspicuous than in their discussions of Christology. All of the proto-orthodox authors appear to have embraced a paradoxical view of Christ, as seen, for example, in the somewhat ambiguous statement of Ignatius already quoted. For them as a group, Christ was in some sense both human and divine. But neither the relationship of Christ's two "natures" nor his relationship to God were yet defined with the kind of nuance one finds in the later christological formulations. The paradoxical affirmations were nonetheless strongly characteristic of these forerunners of orthodoxy, and it was precisely such affirmations that later came to be crystallized in the orthodox creeds.

In no small measure, the christological paradoxes were forced upon these second- and third-century thinkers by their polemical contexts, in which Christians who espoused opposing views denied one or another aspect of the Christian tradition that they themselves found important to affirm, the perplexing results notwithstanding. This is to say, these proto-orthodox Christians opposed anyone who claimed that Christ was a man but not God, and anyone who claimed that he was God but not a man, and anyone who claimed that he was

two distinct beings, one divine and one human. It appears to have been the opposition to variant claims that compelled the orthodox of a later generation to espouse such highly paradoxical Christologies as emerge in their creeds. There is considerable evidence for the existence during the second and third centuries of a variety of Christian groups that made one or another of these "aberrant" claims. It was the opposition to the variant claims of different groups that led orthodox scribes to modify their texts of Scripture.

## VARIANT CHRISTOLOGIES THAT STRUGGLED FOR ORTHODOXY

### THE ADOPTIONISTS

Some of these groups, whom I label as "adoptionists" believed that Christ was a full flesh and blood human being, who was neither pre-existent nor (for most adoptionists) born of a virgin. He was born and he lived as all other humans. But at some point of his existence, usually his baptism, Christ was adopted by God to stand in a special relationship with himself and to mediate his will on earth. Only in this sense was he the "Son of God": Christ was not divine by nature, but was human in every sense of the term. Orthodox Christians opposed such Christologies because, for them, Christ had to be more than a "mere man" for his work of salvation to be effectual. He must himself have been divine.

### THE SEPARATIONISTS

Some of the groups, whom I label as "separationists," believed in a division between the man Jesus and the divine Christ. As we will see, it is a view that was prevalent among second-century Gnostics, one that the orthodox found objectionable on a number of grounds. Other Christians agreed with the adoptionists that Jesus was a full flesh and blood human and that something significant had happened to him at his baptism. For them, however, it was not that he was adopted to be God's Son; instead, at his baptism Jesus came to be indwelt by God. It was then that an emissary from the divine realm, one of the deities of the Godhead, named "Christ," entered into Jesus to empower him for his ministry.

*Luke 4:18 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (KJV)*

Again, at some time prior to his crucifixion, the divine Christ departed from Jesus to return to the Pleroma, the divine realm, leaving him to suffer his fate alone.

### MARCIONITES

Some of the other Christian groups, both among the Gnostics and outside of their ranks (e.g., Marcion), went in another direction, claiming that Jesus Christ was one unified being who was in fact completely divine. Christ was God himself, come to earth for the redemption of his people. But because he was God, he could scarcely have experienced the restrictions and finitude of humanity. And so Jesus was not really human; he only "seemed" or "appeared" to be. Such Christians have been traditionally called docetists (from the Greek word meaning to seem or appear). They were opposed by the orthodox, who insisted that Christ's appearance was no deception: he had actually been a real human being, the Word of God made real flesh.

There were other christological views that came to be rejected by the representatives of incipient orthodoxy, views that are neither as prominent in the sources nor as pertinent to our study in this website. Indeed, the picture overall was far more complex than orthodox sources make it out to be. But, as I will repeatedly



point out, my concerns for the present study are less with heresy as it actually was than with heresy as it was perceived-perceived, that is, by the forerunners of the party that eventually attained a level of dominance. **For it was the perception of their opposition that led scribes of the protoorthodox party to change the sacred texts that they transmitted.** These Christians understood their opponents as denying one or another of the central theses of the faith. **For the representatives of incipient orthodoxy, Christ was divine. He was also human. Yet, he was not two beings, but one. The orthodox Christology of the fourth and fifth centuries, that is, the Christology that came to be the dominant position within Christianity, represents a careful working out of the consequences of these paradoxical affirmations.**



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# THE USE OF ARGUMENTATIVE LITERATURE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR ORTHODOXY

It has often been said that it is easier to understand the proto-orthodox writers of the second and third centuries by what they rejected than by what they affirmed. It would behoove us in our study to now consider the character of their opposition toward the views they considered erroneous. In so doing we will be able to see clearly both why and how the scribes modified their texts of Scripture in light of the polemical contexts within which they worked. We will be better able to see the altering of the manuscripts they reproduced in order to make them more "orthodox" to accepted Roman theological positions on the one hand and less susceptible for use by their opponents who held opposite beliefs about "the Christ" and "Salvation."

## CONTENTIOUS TRACTATES AND POPULAR LITERATURE

The disputatious literature of the second and third centuries can be classified into two different types of writings:

- Those tractates that were aimed directly at exposing and refuting heretical opinion (e.g., the lost works of Justin and Hegessipus, and the more familiar writings of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian) and
- Literary works apparently devoted to other ends that happen to take up the polemical task midstream (e.g., the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen).

As a rule, these writings anticipate Eusebius in their tendency for harsh attacks upon the opponents of established Roman orthodoxy, and it is not certain in every case whether the heresiologists correctly understood the positions they attacked, or even, when they did, whether they presented them accurately. In any case, their reports were anything but disinterested. To some extent, the question of accuracy is raised by the accounts themselves, as they occasionally stand at odds with one another. But the question has become particularly perplexing since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, where Gnostics appear in some respects quite different from how they were depicted by their orthodox opponents (especially the Gnostic Christians).

The attacks leveled by the orthodox against opposing viewpoints became stereotyped fairly quickly. These proto-orthodox wrote with a tendency:

- To describe the heretics are nearly everywhere accused of being self-contradictory, patently absurd, and mutually divergent. Heretics were pictured as inventing doctrines that evidence no clear connection to the apostolic tradition they claim to represent. Heretics were pictured as disavowing the clear teachings of Scripture and perverting scriptural doctrines with ideas drawn from Judaism or pagan philosophy.
- In contrast, orthodox Christians are described as consistent, sensible, and unified. The orthodox were made to look to be the only faithful transmitters of the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, as these have been known from the very beginning. The orthodox were made to



appear as preserving the teachings of Scripture immaculately and setting forth their original meaning apart from external influences.

Most of these pronouncements are, of course, emotionally charged, and prove less useful for understanding the actual teachings of the heretical groups than for seeing the values of the orthodox: for them truth is unified, coherent, clear, ancient, and apostolic. The heat of the debate is evident in other respects as well, for instance, in the stereotyped charges of moral impropriety leveled with surprising frequency against heretical opponents. Eusebius's claim that Simon and his followers engage in activities "more disgusting than the foulest crime known" is fairly typical. Particularly unsavory are the detailed allegations of vile religious practices: For instance, Irenaeus, whose *Against the Heresies* is the earliest heresiological work to have survived, claims that the Valentinians instruct those who possess the divine seed to give their spirit to spiritual things and their flesh to fleshly things, making indiscriminate copulation not only permissible but a *desideratum* for the *pneumatikoi* (*Adv. Haer.* I, 6, 3-4); that the Carpocratians practice indiscriminate sex, indeed that their theology compels them to violate every conceivable moral law and ethical norm so as to avoid being reincarnated *ad infinitum* (*Adv. Haer.* I, 25, 4); and that the heretic Marcus excites attractive women by inspiring them to speak in tongues, after which they become putty in his lascivious hands (*Adv. Haer.* I, 13, 3). Whether these charges are Irenaeus's own or those of his sources is in many instances nearly impossible to decide. There is nothing to suggest that Irenaeus had himself actually the alleged immoralities or had before him reliable sources that had. From Irenaeus we only get slurs against Gnostic morality that were for the most part without substance and only intended to slander and discredit Gnostic Christianity. In any case, this kind of Christian polemic scarcely originated with controversies at the end of the second century. Quite to the contrary, Irenaeus was simply applying proven techniques attested as early as the New Testament period itself. Thus, Frederik Wisse has demonstrated that the portrayal of one's enemies as promiscuous reprobates was firmly entrenched in Christian circles by the time of the writing of the letter of Jude. *The deviant Christians that Jude opposes are licentious (v. 4); indulge in unnatural lust (v. 7) and corrupt the flesh (v. 8); they carouse together (v. 12) and follow their ungodly passions (v. 18).* As Wisse points out, it is hard to imagine such wild folk catching any congregation unawares (v. 4), making it appear that Jude himself is falling back on traditional rhetoric to polemicize against his opponents. Moreover, it is surely significant for recognizing the stereotypical character of these slurs that the Gnostic writings themselves paint an altogether different picture, consistently urging an ascetic life-style for their followers

The heinous behavior alleged of the heretics stands in sharp relief with the flawless purity of the orthodox as we read from the hagiologists. Starting quite early in our period we find stories circulating concerning the refusal of orthodox leaders to commit any immoral act, regardless of the punishment (Justin Martyr, I Apol. 16-18; II Apol. 2) despite their constant abuse by the civil authorities. This stands in sharp contrast to the Marcionites, who are both flagrantly immoral and honored by the state (I. Apol. 26). The most popular form of such stories is the Christian martyrology, a tale that demonstrates the absolute moral rectitude of the faithful, even in the throes of torture and death. The earliest surviving example is the famous *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the story of an orthodox saint who refuses to compromise his convictions, even when confronted with public scorn and execution. The fictitious elements of the account are significant precisely because the bulk of the report appears to have been derived from an eyewitness. The story in its published form heightens the miraculous character of this great orthodox saint, to whom God bore witness in the hour of his greatest torment. There is some question, in fact, as to whether Polycarp actually suffers any pain when burned at the stake, for the author suggests that God performed a miracle in not allowing the fire to touch the martyr's body, while the sweet smell of incense, instead of the reek of sizzling flesh, filled the air. Even more remarkable and fully indicative of this champion of orthodoxy's right standing before God—when a soldier pierces Polycarp's side, such a quantity of blood issues forth as to douse the entire conflagration. A later pious redactor has gone even further to portray a dove flying forth from the gash in Polycarp's side, perhaps signifying his yielding up of the (holy) spirit.

Here, then, is a saint whose God thwarts his opponents' plots against him, even in death. The embellishments

**of the account serve a clear purpose in magnifying a well-known leader of the orthodox movement. It is no accident, in this connection, that it was the orthodox party in particular that stressed the glories of martyrdom and the need to remain faithful even in the face of death. Accounts of such glorious martyrdoms help buttress this characteristically orthodox view, both for the fortification of the martyrs and for the confutation of other Christian groups, notably certain Gnostics, who allegedly spurned the necessity of such stalwart adherence to the faith.** In any event, after the circulation of Polycarp's martyrdom, other martyrologies began to make their appearance. In these as well, the martyrs retain their purity before God, refusing to engage in activity of any kind that might compromise their faith. In return, God sustains the orthodox faithful in their time of trial, enabling them to remain courageous and faithful in torture and death-hard proof of the divine approval of their understanding of the faith.

So from the pens of the "winners" of the theological struggle for orthodoxy as we saw was situated in Rome we have seen implicit in the allegations against the heretics the false accusations of heinous behavior on the one hand and accounts of the supreme piety of the orthodox on the other hand. These false illusions of the truth went a long way in preparing their readers and their assumptions about which groups embodied "righteousness" and "truth." The readers were brainwashed by the false accusations of men who spoke with great power through their pens and they painted a false picture of their "orthodoxy" as sanctioned by God and the "heresy" of their opponents who were of the "Devil" (Bart D. Eheman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, p, 15-17).

For most of the participants in these early Christian debates, "truth" was also closely related to "authority" and to this issue we turn next.





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# THE DEVELOPING CONCEPT OF SCRIPTURE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Here are a few facts that few if any Christians ever hear or discover during their lives:

- For the early Christians before the late 2nd century C.E., there was no such thing as an "Old" or "New" Testament as found in the modern-day Christian Bible today.
- The writers of the New Testament were basically unaware that they were producing writings equivalent to the status of "scripture".
- Until the end of the second century, the New Testament was not generally called "scripture", and it was only the Jewish Bible that was accorded that status.

My purpose in this article is to make you aware of what various scholars have to say about the concept of "Scripture" and the development of this concept in the early Christian church.

## WERE THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS REGARDED AS SCRIPTURE?

Raymond F. Collins writes that the Christian communities of the late first and the beginning of the second century were reluctant to qualify writings produced by Christian writers with the scriptures. **That is because these Christians already had the "scriptures" with them, that was the Jewish Bible - the Hebrew Scriptures comprising the Law, Prophets, and Writings.**

*Within Christianity, almost as variegated in form as was Judaism of the first century, there developed an ever-increasing esteem for the letters that had been written by Paul, the writings that gave testimony to Jesus, and texts that emanated from Christian prophets. We ought not to arrive too quickly at the conclusion that the Christian communities of the late first century and the beginning of the second century were eager to qualify the documents produced by Christian writings as Scripture. In fact, the opposite would seem to be the case. There was a reluctance to equate Christian writings with the Scriptures. This reluctance is due, first of all, to the fact that the Christian Churches of the first several generations already possessed "the Scriptures." These scriptures (hai graphai) were those writings traditionally identified as the Scriptures. Roughly equivalent with what Christians today identify as the Old testament, the Scriptures continued to be valued by the Christian churches as the inspired word of God...*

*There was, however, another factor which impeded the recognition of Christian documents as Scripture. This was the value the churches ascribed to the living voice of Spirit-inspired prophecy (Raymond F. Collins, Introduction to the New Testament (New York, 1987) p. 15-16).*

Therefore the individual books of the New Testament were not considered "scripture" by the early Christians even though they valued the *logion* (oral) words of Jesus in circulation in the region, the traditions, or the "living voice of Spirit-inspired prophecy".

We are also informed that the scriptures of the Jews remained the **only** authoritative "scripture" for the early Christians:

*Eventually Christian theological reflection and hostile relations between Christians and some Jews who did not accept Jesus led to the thesis that the new testament (in the sense of covenant) had taken the place of the old, Mosaic covenant which had become "obsolete"...Of course, even then the Scriptures of Israel remained the Scriptures for Christians (Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 4).*

It was only in the second century that is there evidence of the use of the term "New Testament" for the body of Christian writings.

*Only in the 2nd century do we have evidence of Christians using the term "New Testament" for a body of their own writings, ultimately leading to the use of the designation "Old Testament" for the Scriptures of Israel. It would still be several centuries more before Christians in the Latin and Greek churches came to the wide agreement about the twenty-seven works to be included in a normative or canonical collection. (Ibid.).*

Similarly, The New Bible Dictionary states that:

*It was towards the close of the 2nd century that awareness of the concept of a canon and scriptural status begins to reveal itself in the thought and activity of Christians. (J. D. Douglas (Org. Ed.), F.F. Bruce, R.V.G. Tasker, J.I. Packer, D.J. Wiseman (Consult. Ed.), The New Bible Dictionary (Inter-Varsity Press, London), p. 196).*

That the designations of the term "Old" and "New" Testaments are terms only existent in the late 2nd century C.E. is obvious when The Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia (3rd ed.) informs us that:

*The designations "Old" and "New" seem to have been adopted after c. AD 200 to distinguish the books of the Mosaic covenant and those of the "new" covenant in Christ. New Testament writers, however, simply call the Old Testament the "Scriptures".*

*In other words, the early Christians do not regard the books in the New Testament today as "scripture" and that the awareness of the concept of a canon was a late development in the 2nd century. So much for the claims of modern-day Christians that the New Testament writings was wholly "inspired" by God and is hence "scripture"!*

As we have already noted before, the New Testament was not generally called "scripture" before the end of the 2nd century C.E. As Lee Martin Mc Donald and Stanley E. Porter informs us

*Until the end of the second century, however, the NT was not generally called Scripture (Lee Martin Mc Donald & Stanley E. Porter, Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature (Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2000), p. 611).*

Furthermore, they go on to say that even after the end of the 2nd century the terms "Old" and "New" [Testament] did not gain sufficient recognition:

*At the end of the second century, apart from the term "Scripture," there were no generally accepted*



terms to identify this collection of Christian writings. The terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" had begun to be used in that century but had not gained sufficient recognition by that time...The most that can be said is that there was a general recognition of the scriptural status of the four Gospels, Acts, and most of the Epistles of Paul at the end of the second century. (Ibid., pp. 615-616).

**Answer for yourself:** So when did the development of the current understanding with regard to the concept of "scripture" in the early Christian church began? We are told that

The problem with dating the Muratorian Fragment this early in the second century is that, at that time, there are even fewer parallels acknowledging Christian writings as Scripture, let alone as part of a fixed canon. The NT writings, of course, had to be called Scripture before they could be called canon, and they were only beginning to be called Scripture in the second century. (Ibid., p. 620).

We have already seen that the writers of the New Testament themselves did not consider their own writings as "scripture" and neither did their immediate readers considered them "scripture". The early Christians did not even had a notion of "four gospels". Thus, The New Bible Dictionary states that

The plural form 'Gospels' (GK. evaungelia) would not have been understood in the apostolic age, nor yet for two generations following; it is of the essence of the apostolic message that there is only one true avangelion; whoever proclaims another, says Paul, is anathema . . . The four records which traditionally stand in the forefront of the New Testament are, properly speaking, four records of the one gospel - 'the gospel of God...concerning his Son'....It was not until the middle of the 2nd century AD that the plural form came to be used. (The New Bible Dictionary, Op. Cit., p. 484).

**Answer for yourself:** How did the early Church understood "scripture" then? Lee Martin Mc Donald and Stanley E. Porter explains

Scripture is essentially a written revelation of the word and will of God communicated to his people. When a particular writing was believed by a religious body to have its origins in God and that community recognized its authority for the community, then the writing was elevated to the status of Scripture. This description, however, is only a part of an overall understanding of Scripture for the early church. Unlike in Judaism, the early church understood Scripture to be essentially eschatological; that is, there was the belief that the Scriptures had their primary fulfillment in Jesus....Paul adds that this fulfillment is also found in the Christian community...but he still sees Jesus the Christ as the norm for understanding and using the Scriptures (2 Cor 3:12-16). The church held that the OT writings were of unimpeachable authority...and that they had a Christological fulfillment because they bear witness to Christ. Their authority is acknowledged insofar as they point to God's activity in Jesus Christ. There is no question that the OT (the limits of which were not yet fully defined in the time of Jesus) was authoritative in the early Christian churches... (Lee Martin Mc Donald & Stanley E. Porter, Op. Cit., p. 601).

Thus, the Christian writings were only gradually elevated to the status of "scripture", they however were not seen as "scripture" from the very moment they were composed and neither did the early Christians look upon them as "scripture".

...from the time of Christian beginnings the Jewish writings that would eventually compose the Christian Old Testament canon were broadly known and used and recognized as authoritative, and hence were scriptural, though not yet canonical, for Jews and Christians alike. Peculiarly Christian



writings, however, only later and gradually acquired the status of scripture. In that process, liturgical reading was an important factor. During the late first and early second centuries the books that were read in Christian assemblies were principally the scriptures of Judaism. The question is in what form they were available in early Christian communities. It is not likely that in this early period all churches would have possessed full collections of Jewish scripture. The scriptures of Judaism comprised not a single book but a collection of scrolls, five of the Torah and more of the prophetic books....small Christian congregations probably had only a select group of Jewish texts. Under the circumstances it may be that Christians for a time found it convenient or necessary to use only extracts or "testimonies" drawn from Jewish scriptures, instead of volumes of continuous texts. During the same period Christian writings were still making their way into circulation and had not gained the status of scripture. Nevertheless, their instructional value for Christian congregations was surely recognized, and a given church would have used whatever Christian books had come to hand and proved to be helpful. In this way Christian writings began to be read in the same setting as the Jewish scriptures. (Harry Y. Gamble, Books And Readers In The Early Church: A History Of Early Christian Texts (Yale University Press New Haven and London, 1995), p. 214).

Therefore, we can only conclude that the current belief hold by Christians today, i.e. that the New Testament writings are "scripture", is certainly a new innovation absent in the early Christian church.

**Answer for yourself:** So why do Christians break away from their long-held tradition of upholding the Jewish writings (Old Testament) as their authoritative "scripture"? Scholar C. F. Evans tells us that

*So long as Christianity stood close to Judaism, or was predominantly Jewish, scripture remained the Old Testament, and this situation can be seen persisting in such a document as 1 Clement, with its frequent and almost exclusive appeal to the Old Testament text. The elevation of Christian writings to the position of the new canon, like those writings themselves, was primarily the work of Gentile Christianity, whose literature also betrays a feeling that the very existence of the Old Testament was now a problem to be solved, and that there was need of some new and specifically Christian authority....and what eventually took place was precisely what in the earliest days of the Church could hardly have been conceived, namely, the creation of a further Bible to go along with that already in existence, which was to turn it into the first of two, and in the end to relegate it to the position of 'Old' in a Bible now made up of two testaments. The history of the development of the New Testament Canon is the history of the process by which books written for the most part for other purposes and from other motives came to be given this unique status; and the Study of the New Testament is in part an investigation of why there were any such writings to canonize, and of how, and in what circumstances, they came to possess such qualities as fitted them for their new role, and made it possible for them to continue simply as an expansion of, or supplement to, something else.* (P. R. Ackroyd & C. F. Evans (Ed.), The Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to Jerome, Volume 1, Chapter 9: The New Testament In The Making by C. F. Evans (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 234-235).

Thus, we see how the religion of Christianity, from being merely a subset of Judaism *per se*, eventually broke away from its Semitic roots as the number of Gentile Christians grew and the need for some new and specifically Christian authority began to manifest itself among them.

## CONCLUSION

The belief that the New Testament writings are "scripture" was certainly alien to the understanding of



**"scripture" as conceived by the early Christians, as they strictly adhere to the Jewish writings as authoritative to them.** Moreover, we see that the terms "*Old*" and "*New*" [Testament] were developed at around the same time as the Gentile Christians in the late second century C.E. began pressing for the need of an appeal to a specifically Christian authority.



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## THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We saw in an earlier article the contrast between the "orthodox" heresiologists and their slander against the "heretics" where they accused them of atrocious behavior. We then saw accounts of the supreme piety of the "orthodox" on the other which I should remind you were written by writers from this "orthodox" camp. We saw that this was exaggerated greatly in order to connect the idea of "truth" to the pictures painted by the "orthodox" heresiologists of their own group as against those outrageous actions of those that they had branded as "heretics." Truth for these heresiologists was associated to moral rectitude and sincerity, whereas its opposite, "falsehood," is associated with vile practices and duplicity of those labeled by them as "heretics." For most of the participants in these early Christian debates, "truth" was also closely related to "authority." We see the same principle in the the early theological debates of these heresiologists against the Gnostics and even in the later Church Councils. Underlying these theological debates between the "orthodox" and the Gnostics was the struggle for power and authority over religion and who was able to wield it. Another way to say this is that underlying these theological debates was the struggle for authority and who was able to claim it. It is important to notice and make the connection that it is this issue of authority that relates most closely to another use of literature in this polemical context. Not only did different parties produce literature designed to confute the positions of others while establishing the validity of their own sect and their own religious literature, several groups also argued that certain writings from earlier days were endowed with sacred authority, and that this literature could be employed to authorize a correct understanding of these disputed religious issues that confronted the heresiologists and their opponents. It is this struggle for authority and power over religion that is the first steps that would culminate in the a canon of Scripture, a movement that eventuated in the formation of a "Roman New Testament", a collection of books given authority by its creators and which the "orthodox" would use to justify, give mastery to, and complete domination to their own theological claims which were unique to their own group. We need to remember the context of these struggles for just a second. It all began as a counter movement against the "allegorical" understanding of Christology as it applied to "the Christ." Marcion, who believe Paul was the only one who understood correctly the message of "the Christ," collected Paul's letters and writings and used them in his presentation of the "Gnostic Christ" along with a written gospel reflecting the words of Jesus "the Christ." As we have seen this is the "First New Testament" given to us by Marcion. As we have seen there were others who interpreted "the Christ" in a more literal way and it will be these groups of people who will challenge and refute the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" and in so doing give momentum to the production of a "Second New Testament" which will express this "literal" understanding of "the Christ" instead of the earliest "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ."This replacement New Testament was given to us by proto-Catholics associated with the Church at Rome. This refutation of Marcion in writings similar but different to what Marcion had collected gave this "literal" group a book that they claimed authority for as well. This later Second New Testament would later not only benefit from the "authority" of Rome but would eventually gain a reputation as emanating from God. Let us not forget that we are concerned in our study on this website with the study of the alterations of these early texts in the course of their transcription and this will have an effect upon every religious doctrine and dogmas from "the Christ" to "salvation" and their formation and evolution in the early centuries.



# THE CANON IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The history of the development of the canon is complex, and we are fortunate to have full and competent treatments readily available. Let me recommend to the reader the book by Bruce M. Metzger, The Canon Of The New Testament and Hans von Campenhausen, The Formation of the Christian Bible for your further studies. Although numerous details concerning the process remain in dispute, certain points of significance for the present discussion appear relatively certain and trustworthy. The earliest Christians already possessed a group of books that they considered authoritative, namely, the Jewish Scriptures - the Hebrew Scriptures or at least a large portion of them, for this canon had itself not been finalized by the first century. It is important to note that early Christians themselves occasionally quoted authorities that never made it into the final Hebrew canon. Take a second and look at Jude 9 for an example. They also, by and large, accepted the books of the so-called Old Testament Apocrypha as authoritative. Early within the Christian movement, as early as the New Testament period, some of Jesus' followers began to regard his own teachings as having an authority equal to that of Scripture. The words of Jesus were used to resolve theological and practical issues within early Christian communities and were occasionally revered as were the Hebrew Scriptures before the end of the first century. We encounter quite early our earliest author, Paul, refer to Jesus' words to settle matters of doctrine and practice (I. Thess. 4:15; I Cor. 7:10, 9:14, 11:23-26). Continuing in the Pauline tradition by in the hand of another we find I Tim. 5:18 along with Deut. 25:4. The reference from the Hebrew Scriptures is taken from the already existing Hebrew Scriptures. In addition we find the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* where Jesus' words were understood even more extraordinarily as the very means of salvation: "Whosoever find the explanation of these words will not taste death" (Gos. Thomas, 1. A reference to this is seen in John 5:24.

So too the writings of the Apostle Paul were accorded an authoritative status in some circles. The passage in 2 Pet. 3:16 is often misunderstood today. This passage does not say that Pauline writings are on the same par as the Hebrew Scripture but only that that are often misunderstood as is likewise the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, even within the period of the New Testament, some Christians had begun to adopt a new set of authorities - Jesus and his apostles - to be placed on an equal footing with the Old Testament. It is no accident that the New Testament eventually incorporated Gospels (Jesus) and apostolic writings (Paul and others).

Some say that we may never know precisely what role the controversies between orthodoxy and heresy played in the development of the New Testament canon. But that is really not true. We have already seen that these theological disagreements between the "allegorists" and the "literalists" became very heated at time and carried on for centuries as they debated "Christology." We saw that with the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Emperor Constantine and the *Edict of Toleration* that Christianity was to become the official religion of the Roman Empire. Long before this however we found the "proto-orthodox" theologians like Ignatius, Justin, and Irenaeus in the second century already responding to the earliest Christology of the Docetics and Marcion with volumes of literature which attacked their religious premises concerning everything from "the Christ" to "salvation. But this much is certain: one of the salient criteria applied to determine whether a writing could be considered canonical was whether it was "apostolic," meaning, at the very least, that it could reasonably be attributed to Jesus' apostles or their close allies. This does not mean that a mere claim of apostolic authorship guaranteed a book's inclusion among the Scriptures. The orthodox bishop Serapion, who had initially permitted the reading of the *Gospel of Peter* in his congregations, rescinded his decision as soon as he read the book for himself and saw in it a heretical Christology (it was "allegorical" and he held to a "literal" Christ). His decision was followed by the church at large, which also construed the book's contents as nonapostolic. For him, and for them, this meant that decisions concerning "apostolicity" were ultimately based NOT on claims of authorship per se, but on a book's essential conformity to the "apostolic" doctrine that orthodox Christians claimed as their own unique possession. (Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Oxford



University Press, New York, 1993, p. 18-20).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that now those in control in Rome were NOW deciding what "is" and "is not" apostolic based upon what they deemed "orthodox" and upon "what they had in their possession" as texts which either promoted or were made to promote their OWN theological positions?

**Answer for yourself:** Considering this fact then is it likely that we have believed many things about Jesus and "the Christ" which just possibly are not accurate although we have religious texts in our New Testaments which state such things; texts which were altered and forged and later given to the world as if "Divine"?

**Answer for yourself:** Does our New Testaments teach accurately on the Jewish Messiah, Judaism, Messianism, "the Christ", and even salvation or could many of these religious tenets, dogmas, and doctrines which are espoused on the pages of our New Testament be nothing more than the religious views of those who, over the centuries with the power and might of Rome, became the "orthodox" and in reality then these doctrines we are taught today are not accurate to what the early "allegorical" Christians and followers of Jesus actually believed way back then?

Implicit in such judgments by those who considered themselves "orthodox" is the entire notion of "apostolic succession," to which the orthodox made endless appeal in their efforts to ground their teachings in the time-honored truths conveyed by Jesus to his followers and through them to the orthodox churches. These churches, as taught by these "orthodox Roman" Church, were thought to have been established by the apostles, who had appointed their leaders, endowed them with authority, and bequeathed to them their own writings. So, for a heresiologist like Tertullian, the arguments for apostolic succession and Scriptural authority go hand in hand. In his *Prescription of Heretics* Tertullian can maintain that orthodox Christians need not even engage heretics in debate over the meaning of Scriptures, the fountain of all truth. The Scriptures belong to the heirs of the apostles, and to them alone. And of course this meant to them themselves (Gentiles no less); the Roman Church. Heretics have no claim to these sacred texts, and so their interpretations of them are automatically ruled out of court.

This is by no means to say that a book's orthodoxy was the only criterion that mattered to church leaders concerned with determining the scope of Scripture. Clearly, the actual antiquity of a writing proved important: the Muratorian canon excludes the *Shepherd* of Hermas, for instance, in part because it was penned "recently." This is because the author was well known to be the brother of Bishop Pius of Rome. So, too, the judgment of the (orthodox) church at large always proved significant: reluctant Christians of the West ultimately accepted the Epistle to the Hebrews as canonical, in part because it was so widely used by the orthodox of the East. This fate was mirrored by the Book of Revelation, whose widespread usage in the West led to its reluctant acceptance in the East. Books which could not make credible claims of antiquity or of catholicity were not, for the most part, considered as canonical, however orthodox they might be. At the same time, regardless of its claims to authorship or antiquity, no book that lacked an orthodox appeal would be admitted into the canon. Conformity to the orthodox and what they called "apostolic" was necessary for a book to be considered for the canon. Let us not forget that they read backward many of their later doctrines into apostolic time when unbiased study will show you that the Jews of the first century held no such beliefs and often held just the opposite beliefs that are later laid upon them by "orthodox" Rome.

Issues that motivated the formation of the canon supplied the criteria by which canonical decisions were made. This is seen most clearly with respect to the theological agenda of the dominant "orthodox" party that finalized the grouping of today's twenty-seven book collection. The orthodox rule of faith was the salient criterion for determining a book's canonicity, but it was precisely the struggle to authorize an orthodox system of theology that motivated the movement toward canon in the first place. This all begins with the "literalist" opposition to Marcion and his First New Testament and his and Paul's "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" and progresses over the centuries until Rome has completed its



**Church Councils and hammered out over centuries an acceptable "Christology" which is expressed in their Second New Testament.** It is no mere coincidence that whereas there is no hard evidence of a solidified (or solidifying) canon of Scripture before Marcion (e.g., in the Apostolic Fathers), **soon in response to Marcion the lines begin quickly to harden for the proto-orthodox which are as well proto-Catholics.** In the middle of the second century, Justin at least knows of the **"Memoirs of the Apostles"** and refers to their usage in the churches. Irenaeus will follow quickly on the heels of Justin.

## THE CANON AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

**Answer for yourself:** Justin mentions "the "Memoirs" of the Apostles. Is this a reference to the four Gospels to which we are acquainted today?

Nobody really knows. What we do know however is his references to these texts demonstrate a fair knowledge of the oral traditions regarding Jesus and his teachings; many of which later are incorporated into the Synoptics. Justin's acquaintance with and view of the Fourth Gospel is disputed as well. **Honest scholars will admit that Justin's remarks concerning these "Memoirs of the Apostles" could be derived from common tradition rather than a literary source existing in his day. One fact that goes a long way in proving that Justin was not referring to the Four Gospels of today is the total lack of any of these "Memoirs" in the names of the traditional Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). The first quote by ANY church father to any of these four Canonical Gospels by name (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) cannot be found until after Irenaeus' Second New Testament in 180 C.E.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is it possible that these Four Gospels were created late and written late after the influence of Irenaeus and given the names of the Apostles?

**You will have to decide that for yourself but this website sure can make a strong case for such forgery as a strong possibility as well as another of our sites which exposes the purposeful misquotation of the Hebrew Scriptures as found in these Gospels, mistranslations, misapplications of Hebrew Scriptures and out right invention of Hebrew texts as "quotes" as found in these Four Gospels. The Gentile handiwork of the authors of these Four Gospels is seen very clearly upon serious study of these Gospels. They did not come Jewish Apostles or disciples of Jesus; the external and internal evidences obtained by scrutiny of these Gospels betrays such "orthodox" claims as a pack of lies again told to gain "authority" for the "orthodox's" anti-Gnostic positions.**

Justin is remarkably noncommittal, however, concerning which of these "Memoirs" he finds authoritative: as stated **he never calls any of them by name and never insists that these and only these comprise Scripture.** But Marcion, his contemporary, **began to advocate a well-defined canon of Scripture that conformed closely to his own theological agenda.** As we shall see, Marcion's theology was rooted in a kind of radical Paulinism that was divested of any trace of Judaism. His canon comprised the ten Pauline epistles he knew and **one Gospel which laid the foundation for the later Gospel of Luke. We saw in this previous article on Luke that Marion's gospel came first and that the later Gospel of Luke was built upon the prior Marcion gospel.** Marcion accepted none of the books of the Old Testament. Such a canon not only attested his understanding of Christianity and served to justify it. The idea and the reality of a Christian Bible was the work of Marcion, and the proto-literalists Catholics and the later Roman Church rejected his work. Yet they will follow his example and create a "Second New Testament" intended to present their own views of "the Christ" in refutation to Marcion and his "First New Testament".

**It comes as no surprise to see orthodox Christians (anti-Gnostics) after Marcion strongly urging their**

**own versions of the Christian Bible.** Irenaeus, for instance, a self-conscious ally of Justin, but writing some thirty years later, embraces the Old Testament and insists very emotionally that four Gospels belong to the sacred Scriptures - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - and that this number is fixed by nature, because there are, after all, four winds, and four corners of the earth over which Christianity had spread, and therefore necessarily four pillars, the Gospels, upon which it is built (*Adv. Haer.* III, 11, 7-8).

**Answer for yourself:** Does that sound like the Holy Spirit to you? That we need only 4 accounts of Jesus because we have only 4 winds? What if the wind is blowing out of the southwest or the northeast? Do we need then six?

**Answer for yourself:** If the Apostles truly wrote these "*Memoirs*" then why do they first show up now for the first time and referenced by name for the first time after 180 C.E.?

**Answer for yourself:** Did Irenaeus, due to theological necessity and the struggle for orthodoxy in his attack on the Gnostics and their understanding of "the Christ" craft, add to, delete, and create other writings, gospels, and epistles to express the "then current orthodoxy" which reflected the theology of Rome in 180 C.E. and do so in the name of the Apostles and Paul and present this "orthodox" theology as ultimate New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Why do the genealogies in Matthew and the genealogies of Luke and the infancy narratives of Jesus all of a sudden just appear in 180 C.E. when there is no mention of them for up to 180 years?

**Answer for yourself:** Why does Galatians chapter 3 just appear in 180 C.E. out of nowhere (the strongest anti-Torah portion in the whole of the New Testament)?

**Answer for yourself:** Why didn't Romans have chapters 9-11 in them in 140 C.E. when Marcion, who loved Paul and thought that Paul was the only follower of Jesus who understood him correctly, collected all his letters and presented them in his First New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** What doctrines are in just these additions that we should rethink as possible forgeries and lies?

**Answer for yourself:** Could the anti-Gnostic Irenaeus be giving us a "Christ" with flesh on it to combat the Gnostics ideas of a Docetic Christ? Is the more true understanding of "the Christ" allegorical instead of "literal" and is that why the infancy narratives and birth narratives and genealogies were added after 180 C.E. in order to give "the Christ" a human/fleshly body since "orthodoxy" rejected the earliest understanding of "the Christ" as taught by Gnostics and the earliest followers of Jesus?

**Answer for yourself:** Are these writings, the current New Testament, truthful or written to bolster the anti-Gnostic understanding of "the Christ" which Rome rejected?

**It scarcely appears to be accidental that between the noncommittal Justin and the emphatic Irenaeus looms the spreading church of the Marcionites, with their established canon of Scripture.** Rome had to act and act quickly and decisively and did so in creating their own book and putting the power and authority behind it during these years between 140 and 180 C.E. The new canon might have begun to develop already by the end of the first century, but the conflict among various Christian groups was what led one of them - the one that was later embraced by the champions of the conflict (Rome)- to argue for the authority and, therefore, the canonicity, of certain writings thought to be apostolic, that is, thought to contain the teachings of Jesus' earliest followers. **The rise of the Christian canon thus represents one of the weapons of the orthodox arsenal, used to establish the orthodox version of Christianity to the exclusion of all competing views.**





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## WHO DECIDED THE HERMENEUTICS....THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXTS?

The canonization of textual authorities was not in itself, however, a ultimate and sufficient weapon for the orthodox party (Rome) in their struggle for "orthodoxy." Having a text is not the same thing as understanding a text, and, as orthodox (Rome) Christians knew too well, interpreters can understand texts any way they choose, given adequate ingenuity and a sufficiently flexible hermeneutic. This is one of the big problems the "orthodox" had with the Gnostics since they relied on an "allegorical" hermeneutic and interpretation of the texts. For them "the Christ" was a mystery beyond comprehension. Thus the need for myth to explain the unexplainable.

- *Rom 16:25 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:3 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)*
- *Eph 6:19 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (KJV)*
- *Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*
- *Col 4:3 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** How best can you explain a "mystery" such as "Christ in you"?

Some might say "literally" but I cannot ever remember seeing one person literally "in" another person. So obviously the realm of "myth" and "allegory" and "metaphor" was chosen to convey certain knowledge that is above this Spiritual plane which is beyond our "literal" plane of existence. No wonder the Gnostics as well as the Ancients best explained God and Cosmology/Universe in "pictures," "myths," "metaphors," and "allegories".

## LITERAL EXEGESIS OR ALLEGORICAL EXEGESIS?

Space will not allow me to go into all the complexities of the early hermeneutical debates between the Gnostics and the anti-Gnostic, but I can point out that one of the focal points of the intra-Christian conflicts in the period was precisely the matter of how one determines the meaning of a text. For orthodox church fathers the texts had self-evident meanings and were the clear teachings of Scripture that can be unpacked

through accepted methods of grammatical, lexical, and historical exegesis-that is, by what they called "literal" exegesis.

It is not that the orthodox opposed the use of figurative or allegorical interpretation per se. Even those fathers who insisted most strenuously on construing texts "literally" practiced allegorical exegesis when it suited their purposes, making texts refer to persons, events, or doctrines that in fact appeared unrelated to their literal meanings. We need to understand that the orthodox did oppose the use of allegory when it imposed meanings on the text that the Scriptures, when literally construed, explicitly rejected.

## HOW IS GOD TO BE UNDERSTOOD SINCE HE IS INCORPOREAL AND INVISIBLE?

**Answer for yourself:** If one does the studies into "the Christ" and the Ancient's understanding of God and Cosmology then will we find that Divine concepts handed down by the Ancient since Egypt were transmitted "literally" or "allegorically"? We find that the "allegorical" manner of interpretation has been used since the beginning of time to express Divine concepts that often beyond the ability of mankind to understand the "mystery" of the Spiritual realm.

Scholars and thinkers through the years have offered their views on how myth can be used to understand both the sacred and mundane world. For many myths of non-Christian religions were seen simply as distorted Biblical narratives. No doubt individuals with strong prejudices used this line of reasoning as a way to explain the vast similarities that appear in mythologies of radically different cultures, like the abundance of flood narratives. Giambattista Vico was one of the first scholars to argue against this view. He saw myths as imaginative attempts to solve the many mysteries of life and the universe. From there, scholars have developed an abundance of ways to interpret myth. It is nearer the truth to say that Gnosticism expresses a specific religious experience, an experience that does not lend itself to the language of theology or philosophy, but which is instead closely affinitized to, and expresses itself through, the medium of myth. Indeed, one finds that most Gnostic scriptures take the forms of myths. The term "myth" should not here be taken to mean "stories that are not true", but rather, that the truths embodied in these myths are of a different order from the dogmas of theology or the statements of philosophy.

This "misuse" of the method "allegorical" interpretation was attacked even among the orthodox for whom allegory was the hermeneutical method of choice: Origen of Alexandria, the most avid advocate of allegory among the orthodox, actually argued for the primacy of the literal sense of Scripture, refusing to acknowledge the force of a literal interpretation only when it proved to be impossible, absurd, or blasphemous. In establishing the primacy of the literal sense, whenever such a sense was possible, Origen explicitly set himself against his Gnostic opponent Heracleon, whose allegorical commentary on the Fourth Gospel was the immediate occasion for his own.

It was in fact the Gnostics that the orthodox found particularly disconcerting when it came to the interpretation of Scripture. As is repeatedly affirmed in the heresiological reports, Gnostic Christians evidenced an uncanny ability to find the details of their own doctrinal systems in texts that appeared at first glance (following the canons of literal exegesis) to discuss nothing of the sort. Gnostic exegeses of specific New Testament texts are collected and discussed in Elaine Pagel's The Johannine Gospel In Valentinian Exegesis and The Gnostic Paul. None of these Gnostic interpretations could be accepted by Irenaeus, who not only found them absurdly unrelated to the literal meanings of the texts themselves, but also directly contradicted by the "clear and plain" (i.e., clear and plain to Irenaeus, not to the Gnostics) teachings of Scripture. Again this is to be expected from the opponents of the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ."

**Answer for yourself:** Were those holding to a "literal" interpretation correct and those who held to an



**"allegorical" interpretation incorrect? This website is making that case that they were not and it was they who corrupted the Ancient understandings of God, Cosmology, Salvation, and "the Christ." Let it be said that some of the exegetical leaps that Irenaeus, Tertullian, and their orthodox colleagues made in order to find their own doctrines in Scripture appear no less farfetched than those made by the Gnostics. The point is that regardless of the validity of the argument and regardless of its effectiveness (the Gnostics, at least, did not buy it), orthodox church writers insisted not only that there was an authoritative canon of Scripture filled with apostolic teaching, but that they themselves knew what that teaching was and that it was readily unpacked by means of a literal, that is, historical-grammatical mode of exegesis.**

## **WHO DO WE BELIEVE....THE EARLIER "ALLEGORICAL" GNOSTIC INTERPRETATION OF "THE CHRIST" OR THE LATER "LITERALIST" ROMAN INTERPRETATION OF "THE CHRIST"?**

**It would be a mistake to think, however, that the Gnostics saw themselves as advocating arbitrary and groundless speculations for texts that in fact had nothing to do with them. In point of fact, the Gnostics claimed authorization for their views by appealing to the apostles, and through them to Jesus, as the guarantors of their doctrines.** After his resurrection, Christ had allegedly revealed the secrets of true religion to his apostles, who in turn transmitted them orally to those they deemed worthy. **This secret knowledge comprised both the mystical doctrines of the (Christian-) Gnostic religion and the hermeneutical keys needed to find these teachings in the sacred texts, texts that the majority of church people errantly insisted on construing literally. Interestingly enough, the Gnostic Christians could make plausible claims for the apostolicity of their views.** Clement of Alexandria reports in his *Stromateis* that Valentinus was a disciple of Theudas, allegedly a follower of Paul, and that Basilides studied under Glaukia, a supposed disciple of Peter (*Strom.* 7, 17, 106). On the surface of it, these genealogical links are no more or less credible than those found in the bishop lists of the orthodox historian Eusebius, who ties the dominant leadership of the major Christian sees to the apostles, largely through otherwise unknown intermediaries. Bauer dismisses Eusebius' list of Alexandrian bishops as utter falsehood from Eusebius (*Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 45).

**Nor did Gnostic Christians need to rely exclusively on secret oral traditions to establish their claims to represent the apostolic religion. For they, along with other Christian groups vying for converts, possessed literary works published in the names of the apostles that could be used - even if read literally - to support their interpretations.** Evidence suggests that the **practice of forgery was remarkably widespread**, and that all sides (the early representatives of orthodoxy included) were occasionally liable to the charge.



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# THE USE OF FORGERY IN THE TRANSMISSION OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

For me as my studies increase it eventually led to manuscript comparisons between the Hebrew Scriptures and their purposeful misquotation, mistranslation, misapplication and pure invention when translated into the Greek. That was only compounded when I realize that the Greek Septuagint with all these forgeries was to become the very foundation for all later Christian Old Testaments and all the later quotes from it as found in our New Testament today. I was devastated at what I found when the reality of what I had come to actually "believe" for my salvation finally dawned upon me. I was broken to my very core and fearful to say the least and it would take a couple of more years of frightful study before I could resume my composure and again achieve a peace about my "religious beliefs system." Along the way it dawned upon me that the creation and dissemination of ancient forgeries makes for a fascinating area of study, one that has been rigorously pursued in modern scholarship. That Christians were engaged in such activities comes as no shock to scholars of the period: accusations of forgery rifled back and forth, and there is at least one instance of a forger - he happens to have belonged to an orthodox church - confessing to the deed. I am referring to the author of the Acts of Paul, who, according to Tertullian was a presbyter of a church in Asia Minor. Unlike the modern Christian world, which by and large knows only twenty-seven books from the early Christian period, this was a world that saw "apostolic" gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses by the dozens, most of them pseudonymous, nearly all of them late-from the second century and beyond. Many of these texts are conveniently discussed and translated in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, the 5th edition and in Robinson's The Nag Hammadi Library and in Layton's The Gnostic Scriptures and in James Charlesworth's The New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The frequent occurrence of forgery in this period does not suggest a basic tolerance of the practice. In actuality, it was widely and strongly condemned, sometimes even within documents that are themselves patently forged. This latter ploy serves, of course, to throw the scent off one's own deceit. One of its striking occurrences is in the orthodox *Apostolic Constitutions*, a book of ecclesiastical instructions, ostensibly written in the name of Jesus' apostles, which warns its readers to avoid books falsely written in the name of Jesus' apostles (VI, 16). One cannot help thinking of 2 Thessalonians, which cautions against letters falsely penned in Paul's name (2:1-2); many New Testament scholars believe that 2 Thessalonians is itself non-Pauline.

We have seen that Irenaeus accuses various heretical groups of producing and distributing forged documents. We are fortunate to have some of these documents now in our possession, in part due to the remarkable discoveries of the present century. As already seen, however, heretics were not alone in producing such works. The *Apostolic Constitutions* is in fact an orthodox production, as is 3 Corinthians, forged by the presbyter of Asia Minor whom Tertullian condemns. So far as can be determined, in neither case was the deceit meant for ill: the deposed presbyter claimed that he did it "out of love for Paul," meaning, we might suppose, that his use of Paul's pen to condemn a Docetic Christology was meant to honor the apostle's memory as one who strove for orthodoxy even from beyond the grave. The irony of all of this is that Paul was Docetic as well. This shows the utter confusion that occurs following the apostolic age and the lack of integrity of the religious documents as many groups sought authority



for their own unique brand of "orthodoxy." Similar motivations and grounding of one's views in the writings of various apostles' names occurred quite early in the Christian tradition, as the questionable authorship of many of the canonical writings themselves attest. Along with 2 Thessalonians, for which the jury is still out, we can mention the two other deutero-Pauline Epistles of Colossians and Ephesians, whose authorship remain seriously disputed after decades of intensive research. And notwithstanding attempts to reopen the debate, the Pastoral Epistles are almost universally regarded as pseudonymous, as is 2 Peter. The authorship of 1 Peter, on the other hand, remains an open question. The letters of Jude and James and the book of Revelation are probably homonymous rather than pseudonymous: nothing in them suggest an intentional deceit so much as the simple use of a common name, mistakenly taken to be that of an earth companion of Jesus. The Gospels and Acts are, of course, simply anonymous (Bart Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption Of Scripture, Oxford Univ. Press, New York: 1993, p. 42).

If we cannot really speak of orthodoxy per se in the second and third centuries, we can scarcely speak of it during the New Testament period itself. What is clear, however, is that these pseudepigraphs proved useful to the incipient orthodoxy of our period in its struggles with various forms of heresy. It is also clear that incentives for forgery did not expire when the urgency of assembling a Christian canon had passed away. Quite to the contrary, the evidence suggests that with the passing of time there came an increased rate of production of forgeries from all sides. It is especially intriguing to note that in the fourth century and later, as the proto-orthodox writers themselves came to be valued as theological authorities by their orthodox descendants, documents came to be forged in *their* names to provide early instances of theological precision otherwise unattested in writings of the ante-Nicene age. Most of these forgeries—for example, those in the names of Ignatius and Dionysius—were not exposed until modern times.

Even within our period one finds forged documents that similarly serve theological ends in justifying the ideas of proto-orthodoxy by putting them on the lips of the apostles. There are too many examples of this type of forgery to mention but a few will suffice:

We can start with the quotations in the New Testament taken from the Old Testament Scriptures which again are taken from the Septuagint which are in many, many instances purposeful misquotations, mistranslations, misapplications, and pure inventions of the Hebrew Scriptures. We have several websites detailing this forgery which again was done for the purpose of achieving authority for one particular sects' religious beliefs in the promoting of their views as accepted "orthodoxy."

- We next move to the the above mention of the Pastoral Epistles attributed to Paul,
- the book of 2 Thessalonians which is doubtful as to Pauline authorship,
- the deutero-Pauline Epistles of Colossians and Ephesians, whose authorship remain seriously disputed after decades of intensive research.
- And 2 Peter who is regarded as pseudonymous
- The authorship of 1 Peter, on the other hand, remains an open question.
- Within books we have the additions to them much later from when penned by the ascribed author: examples include the addition of the
  - genealogies to the Gospel of Matthew and Luke,
  - the infancy narratives to Luke,
  - all of Galatians chapter three except one verse, and
  - all of Romans chapters 9-11 which were missing in the First New Testament of Marcion.

I could go on but we will address these individually later in the website.

## THE LITERARY STRUGGLE FOR ORTHODOXY

So far in this website I have laid a comprehensive foundation for our further study into the "orthodox corruption of Scripture" during the second through the third century. This was an age of competing interpretations of Christianity. The competition cannot be conceived as a purely ideational struggle, however, since it consisted of more or less well-defined social groups, each of which pressed for its understanding of the religion, **but only one of which proved successful. The members of the victorious party had all along claimed their interpretations to be ancient and apostolic, and argued that their competitors espoused corrupted versions of the primitive faith. They pressed home these claims to such an extent that their views became normative for Christianity in their own day and determinative of the course of Christianity for time to come.**

**The Christians who represented these views in the second and third centuries were not, strictly speaking, orthodox in either the traditional or modern understandings of the term.** They did not understand the faith with the nuance and sophistication later required of orthodox thinkers, **nor did they yet (apparently) comprise an absolute majority.** But they set the norm for centuries to come doctrinally because of their forgery of New Testament texts as they pushed through by force and coercion their own particular flavor of "orthodoxy" and saw to it that it would be represented upon the pages of the "Last" New Testament of Rome. But as ancestors of the party that was destined to prevail - speaking metaphorically rather than theologically - these Christians did represent a kind of incipient orthodoxy, and can well be labeled proto-orthodox.

**Although these Christians could not know that their views would eventually predominate, they fought diligently toward that end. One significant arena of their engagement was literary. The literary assault included detailed descriptions and castigations of heretical positions, fabricated accounts of the heinous behavior of their opponents and of the moral rectitude of their own leaders, and concocted writings allegedly written by the original followers of Jesus, in which their own positions were advanced and those of their opponents were attacked. There was as yet no "New Testament" per se, although there was certainly a movement afoot to create one, to collect a group of "apostolic" authorities that attested the orthodox understanding of the faith. At the same time, the proto-orthodox group began to insist that the textual authorities of this canon be interpreted in certain (literal) ways. This was done in order to prevent the "misuse" of the texts in the hands of heretics who proved adept at finding their own aberrant doctrines wherever they chose to look for them.**

Despite the growing sense among proto-orthodox Christians that the apostolic writings were authoritative bearers of tradition, these documents were not themselves inviolable in any real, material sense. **The fluidity of the textual tradition in the early period of transmission has long been recognized within the field of New Testament studies. As we move beyond the context of our study into the study itself, this is the one point we must constantly bear in mind as we examine individual texts and compare them between the First New Testament of Marcion and the Second New Testament of Rome.** The texts of the books that were later to comprise the New Testament were neither fixed in stone nor flawlessly reproduced by machines capable of guaranteeing the exactitude of their replication. They were copied by hand - one manuscript serving as the exemplar of the next, **copied by errant human beings of differing degrees of ability, temperament, vigilance, and theological agenda in their promotion of their group's "orthodox beliefs."** The earliest scribes were by and large private individuals, not paid professionals, and in many instances their copies were not double-checked for accuracy. **As we now know so well, mistakes-scores of them-were made.**

**Answer for yourself:** Was the transmission and copying of the New Testament demonstrated a higher standard for accuracy than the transmission of the Hebrew Scriptures? Let us examine this to find out.

**Answer for yourself:** Were any of these "mistakes" intentional alterations? Our other websites demonstrate beyond any doubt that they were! **The copyists were warm-blooded Christians, living in a world of wide-**



ranging theological debates; most scribes were surely cognizant of these debates, and many were surely participants.

**Answer for yourself:** Did their polemical contexts affect the way these Christians copied the texts they construed as Scripture? They sure did. Scribes of the second and third centuries in fact altered their texts of Scripture at significant points in order to make them more orthodox on the one hand and less susceptible to heretical interpretation on the other.



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## "ORTHODOX" ALTERATIONS MADE TO THE TEXTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I remember it like yesterday. There I was in my first year of Biblical Greek in Seminary and so excited to be studying the original language of the New Testament texts. Wanting to go beyond the minimum I began to read other books on the Greek text of the New Testament. I was horrified at what I began to see; namely, the extent of the differences between the existing texts we have today. The more I studied and examined these differences between these texts it quickly occurred to me that I was not just observing simple scribal errors but conscious manipulation of "religious doctrines" the more I examined the existing manuscript evidences. Coupled with this new understanding of the New Testament I vowed that I had to get to the bottom of this. Little was I prepared for where this direction of study would lead me and how my life would be consumed with the search for truths behinds these "altered" texts. At that time in my life I just knew "something was wrong" and I could not put my finger upon it. Well that was over 15 years ago and now I know exactly what has happened and again have devoted my life to espousing these "theological inventions" that have not only robbed me but untold millions of people of the earlier truths concerning God which these "altered" manuscripts of the New Testament have obscured to all but those with the necessary knowledge to spot the forgeries when they read them. Over the years as my studies advanced and became more in-depth I had to wonder why so many "scholars" who write upon the New Testament had not seen what I was seeing and written more upon this topic of "forgery" in the New Testament. I found it not only incredible but unbelievable that other scholars in New Testament studies had not seen or become aware in their studies of the New Testament the many "key theological" variations among these existing texts which I had discovered. The implications of such forgery every becoming known to normal Christians were staggering when contemplated. There was no way that as a Pastor I could keep up the deception once learning the extent of this forgery for I knew that God now knew that I knew. The only recourse for me was to resign my pastorate which I did.

**Answer for yourself:** Would you not have thought, like myself, that it would have been a common practice for historians, specials, and scholars to study scribal changes to the texts of Christian Scriptures in connection with the polemical and theological debates and the struggle for "orthodoxy" in the second and third centuries? Well you might think so but that is not the case as few men have ever investigated this area of study. That is not to say that these instances of forgery of religious texts have gone unnoticed but few have ever devoted the energy or the time to deal with the problem at the depth it deserves. I guess they are like most of us; namely, they "assume" the Bible we have inherited all of our lives is "God-breathed, inspired, inerrant, and infallible."

**Answer for yourself:** Surely the testimony of the Church Fathers is not inaccurate is it? Well that is the problem.....I found it to be biased, one sided, hateful, untruthful, and often an outright lie!

As long as you never knew of the textual problems in the New Testament then everything is fine but there is one problem: My studies down through the years stand as a direct challenge to the views of other textual scholars from the "orthodox" camp who deny the significance of theologically motivated variations among the New Testament manuscripts altogether. In light of my discoveries I am flabbergasted when I read such dribble from



men of distinction, preeminence, and prestige who make such comments and who seem to know no better. It is time for them to quit accepting the status quo and study more deeply into these issues as I and others have done who come to the truth on this matter.

**Of course the basic idea that Christian scribes would alter their texts of Scripture in order to make them "say" what they were already thought to "mean" as interpreted by the ruling group who considered themselves the voice of "orthodoxy" is itself nothing new.** From the earliest of times we know that Christians were concerned about the falsification of texts - including, sometimes, their own. The fear is expressed by the first-century prophet John, who uses a standardized curse formula to protect the text of his Apocalypse from malevolent tampering (22:18-19).

*Rev 22:18 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** But who would dare to falsify Scripture? Well there are many and it depends on which "theological" camp you asked. **Only by comparing the oldest existing texts with the later versions of them can we be sure we have the "oldest" and "best" manuscripts which are closer to the "truths" once revealed through Divine revelation. The further we can go back the closer we get to "the truth" before the fish story gets longer.**

In this game of forgery of religious texts the definition of who is a "heretic" depends upon which group you ask....the "allegorical" Gnostics or the "orthodox" literals. Dionysius says: *"It is therefore no wonder that some have attempted even to falsify the Scriptures of the Lord, when they have done the same in writings that are not at all their equal"* (Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* IV, 23). So forgery of religious texts was a common practice in the time of Eusebius and before.

Accusations of forgery become a standard feature of the polemics of the second through the third century. **While a variety of Christian groups may well have made the charges, we know it best from the pens of the literal "orthodox" groups, a fact not altogether surprising, as theirs are the works that have survived since it was the "orthodox" religion of Rome that burned the libraries and destroyed the writings of their theological adversaries and opponents.**

## THE CHARGE OF FORGERY LEVELED AGAINST MARCION....CAN IT HOLD WATER?

The bias and slander of the early "orthodox" Roman church and their heresiologists and heresy hunters has stigmatized Marcion as the "spawn of Satan" and this evil depiction of him has lasted over 1900 years. What we hope to do is look at Marcion objectively since these proto-orthodox Catholics found Marcion blamable on these grounds since they would later charge him with the crime of surgically "removing" unpalatable portions of both the Pauline epistles and Luke-passages that undermined his Gnostic religious beliefs. This is the traditional charge against Marcion that we find common in the writings of these heresiologists but we showed you in an earlier article on Marcion's gospel which he included in his First New Testament that there is good evidence that it predated the later Gospel of Luke and that most likely the traditional Gospel of Luke was built by additions on top of Marcion's gospel. **This means that Marcion did not surgically remove anything for a later Gospel of Luke but rather the "orthodox" heresiologist Irenaeus most likely "added" many parts to the Marcion gospel of the First New Testament in his efforts to combat Gnostic theology which he did not accept.**

**We must at this juncture in the website understand fully the importance of determining accurately if Marcion "cut out" parts of an already existing documents what he objected to or if the later**

**heresiologists "added" anti-Gnostic theology which was not reflective of the earliest beliefs held concerning "the Christ" and Jesus. The stakes are immense that we get this right.**

The reason why I began this website with studies in Gnosticism is that unless you are familiar with Gnosticism in all of its nuances then it will very hard for us to see these "Gnostic doctrines" on the pages of the New Testament as opposed to the "anti-Gnostic doctrines" on the same pages of the New Testament. We have seen that the earliest New Testament espoused "Gnosticism" and not "Roman orthodoxy." Yet the Second New Testament some 40 years later in response to Marcion will definitely be "Roman orthodoxy" with all Gnostic passages filtered through a "literal" understanding. Let me say again that is paramount to understand Gnosticism if we ever hope of determining which camp represented the earliest beliefs of the Apostles and follower of Jesus and "the Christ."

This is mandatory if we ever hope to come to the truth about which theological position best represents the truth concerning "the Christ" and the true salvation of God. All is not hopeless because there is a way we can determine if Marcion is really "the heretic" or if the "orthodoxy" camp is the real "heretic" and changed the first New Testament of Marcion to confuse, change, and write out the Gnosticism of the earliest New Testament and the earliest beliefs of the followers of Jesus concerning "the Christ."

We must examine intensely and compare texts with texts; the texts from the First New Testament of the Gnostic Marcion with texts from Irenaeus' Second New Testament. **As we already have seen that scholars attest to the fact that the "orthodox" altered these sacred texts to conform them to the evolving Roman theological stance concerning "the Christ" then we must keep this fact before us when we see for ourselves how "anti-Gnostic" passages suddenly appear with Irenaeus' later Second New Testament ONLY after Marcion collected and taught from his First New Testament. You would expect that Marcion, if he was believing in a Gnostic allegorical, non-fleshly Christ, to remove all references of a "human Christ/Jesus" from the texts before he collected his New Testament and this what he is blamed of by the "orthodox" camp. But in studying Gnosticism we learned many things; one is that matter is believed to be evil and not redeemable and thus the Gnostics saw no benefit to the Torah which, through obedience, tries to bring God's redemption to the physical universe (earth and man). Damaging to the "orthodox" argument that Marcion "cut out" of the existing writings of Paul in his day and the Gospel of Luke in his day is the fact that Marcion was anti-Torah and many later Pauline anti-Torah portions in the Second New Testament of Rome are completely missing in Marcion's First New Testament.**

**Answer for yourself:** Did you understand that? Why would Marcion, who was anti-Torah, and who said that ONLY Paul represented "the Christ" accurately and that the Apostles did not, and that Paul ONLY understood the message of "the Christ" correctly, fail to include all of the Pauline writings of his day and which supported his theological stance against the Jews and the Old Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Take a second to read Galatians chapter 3. Why would Marcion, who was anti-Torah not include this chapter in the Galatians that he collected in his First New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not stand to reason that Marcion would not have included these pro-Marcionites portions of texts that supported his stance because they did not exist in his day but were written later?

We have read the scholars and the evidence that the "orthodox corruption of Scripture" was common place in the second and third centuries; namely because these proto-Catholics were trying to stunt the spread of Gnosticism and the "Gnostic Christ" and the allegorical understanding of the concept which has come down through history and the Ancients basically in an "allegorical" understanding and not a "literal" understanding.

When we objectively notice all the passages that occur in the Second New Testament from Irenaeus in 180 C.E. and compare these "added" passages ONLY we see a very clear picture of tampering of the earlier texts in order to spread anti-Gnosticism.



**Missing from Marcion's First New Testament but present in Irenaeus' Second New Testament are:**

- **The genealogy of Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matthew**
- **The birth narrative in Matthew**
- **The visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus in Matthew**
- **The threat to kill the baby Jesus and the flight into Egypt in Matthew**
- **The birth of John the Baptist in Luke**
- **The Angelic announcement to Mary of her pregnancy with "the Christ" in Luke**
- **The Magnificat in Luke**
- **The birth of Jesus In Luke**
- **The event of the shepherds and the angels in Luke**
- **The presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple in Luke**
- **The encounter with Simeon and Anna with the baby Jesus in Luke**
- **The boy Jesus in the temple in Luke**
- **John's baptism of Jesus in the Jordan when he receives the anointing "the Christ"**
- **The genealogy of Jesus in Luke**
- **The temptation of Jesus and physical deprivation in Luke**
- **Jesus teaching in the Nazareth synagogue**

**Answer for yourself:** What do all of these above accounts found **ONLY** in the Second New Testament have in common?

Stumped? They all speak of a "human" and "fleshly" birth and life of the one who will be later called "the Christ." These are not in Marcion's First New Testament since like all Gnostics "the Christ" was not a human being with flesh but an appearance of God among men.

But this evidence is only circumstantial and not conclusive that Marcion did not "cut out" these portions from an already existing text describing "the Christ" as a "literal" human. What is, in my opinion, conclusive that Marion did not excise or "cut out" a human Christ Jesus from earlier writings is the damaging evidence of other Gnostic beliefs which overlap with "orthodox" beliefs which are not in Marcion's First New Testament but would have supported Marcion's theological positions in his debates with the Jews and Judaism. The anti-Torah parts from the Gnostic Pauline literature that are lacking in Marcion's First New Testament but existent in Irenaeus' Second New Testament are hard to explain away; for had they existed in Marcion's day he most certainly would have used them. But that is not all.

Marcion believed that salvation was by faith alone and not faith plus works/deeds as expressed in Judaism. This is all the more problematic when we realize that absent from Marcion's collection of Pauline writings, in particular the book of Romans, is the total absence of chapters 9-11, which again would have served Marcion's theology well had they existed in his day. No greater passage could Marcion find or use to promote his theology is Rom. 10:9-10 but this is totally absent from Marcion's Romans in 140 C.E.

***Rom 10:9-10 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (KJV)***

This key "Christian" passage on faith and salvation would have been an ace up Marcion's sleeve in his disputes with the Jews over the Messiah and "the Christ." But he never used it or most likely knew of it because it did not exist in his day and was present in the book of Romans which Marcion presented to the world. It would take another 40 years for Irenaeus, or another proto-orthodox-catholic, to pen these three anti-Jewish chapters and include them in the existing Romans of Marcion's day. Again, as we saw before, tis is a [perfect example of anti-Semitic forgery of sacred texts](http://firstnewtestament.net/firms.com/orthodox_alterations_made_texts_scripture.htm) since the texts missing in Marcion's New Testament would have been perfect for him to allude to had he known that they had existed with the other Pauline Romans of his day. This was later added by proto-Catholics in Paul's name; something by now we should be getting familiar with.

**Answer for yourself:** What plausible reason could there be for Marcion to not include Pauline writings; especially in light that for Marcion Paul was the only true interpreter of "the Christ's" message to the world?

**Answer for yourself:** What plausible reason could there be why Marcion would fail to include in his First New Testament these passages that contained quite often religious beliefs which he not only could support but would have loved to made available to him in his attack upon the Jews, their Law, and the Old Testament?

It always seems strange to me that Marcion would cut out of the Pauline corpus of writings key theological tenets which would support his own arguments; especially in light that Marcion states emphatically that ONLY Paul had it right. The only logical conclusion that the "thinking believer" can accept is that Marcion did not "cut out" anything; rather, much that we have today was added later and their inclusion has muddled the prior and earlier understanding of the Ancients concerning "the Christ," God, Cosmology, and God's true salvation.

Interestingly, heretical groups with just the opposite theological proclivities were charged with precisely the same scribal activities of modifying and changing the sacred texts.

Despite the frequency of the charge that heretic Gnostics corrupted their texts of Scripture, very few traces of their having done so have survived antiquity. In part this may simply show that the winners not only write the history, they also reproduce the texts. Orthodox Christians would not be likely to preserve, let alone replicate, texts of Scripture that evidence clear heretical biases.

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not now appear more clearly that it was the orthodox-proto-Catholics that produced copies of Scripture that supported their own biases in refutation of prior Gnostic understanding of God and "the Christ"? That it was they who took Marcion's First New Testament and altered it by adding passages that gave the "allegorical Christ" flesh and made it appear as if he was an "incarnation" in a human? By the way that is what the virgin birth is all about anyway? It would sure appear so!

**Answer for yourself:** Is there any irrefutable proof that the above hypothesis is true without a doubt? Well yes there is. The whole virgin birth narrative is taken from the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14:

First the passage in the Greek Old Testament and later English translation of Isa. 7:14:

*Isa 7:14 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (KJV)*

Next the passage from the Hebrew of Isaiah 7:14:

*14 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Hebrew Tanakh)*

What we see is that the original prophecy was not about a "virgin" but a young woman, who was known to King Ahaz in his day, conceiving in the time period of King Ahaz and not some 850 years later. Before this child would grow up to know right from wrong the enemies of Israel would be crushed by God as God demonstrated that He was the "ONLY" Savior of Israel. The infancy narratives that were added to the Second New Testament both reflect this "virgin" birth as found in Matt. 1:23 and Luke 1:27 but what is staggering is that these were omitted entirely in Marcion's First New Testament.

First, a word about the extent of textual variation among the surviving manuscripts. Although the proto-orthodox Christians of the second and third centuries began to ascribe canonical standing to the writings that later became the New Testament and simultaneously to urge the literal interpretation of their words, they regrettably did not preserve any of their autographs. To be sure, they may not have



been able to do so. The autographs may well have perished before the second century. In any event, none of them now survive. What do survive are copies made over the course of centuries, or more accurately, copies of the copies of the copies, some 5,366 of them in the Greek language alone, that date from the second century down to the sixteenth. Strikingly, with the exception of the smallest fragments, no two of these copies are exactly alike in all their particulars. No one knows how many differences, or variant readings, occur among the surviving witnesses, but they must number in the hundreds of thousands.

Not all textual variants, however, are created equal. By far the vast majority are purely "accidental," readily explained as resulting from scribal ineptitude, carelessness, or fatigue. Haphazard scribal blunders include such things as misspelled words, the inadvertent omission of a word or line, and its obverse, the meaningless repetition of a word or line. The reality is that scribes, especially in the early centuries before the production of manuscripts became the domain of the professional, were not as scrupulous in their transcriptions as one might have hoped or expected. And even the most conscientious were not free from error.

My interest in the present study, however, is not with accidental changes but with those that appear to have been made intentionally for "theological" reasons. Even a misspelled word may have been generated deliberately, for example, by a scribe who wrongly assumed that his predecessor had made an error. Nonetheless, there are some kinds of textual changes for which it is difficult to account apart from the deliberate activity of a transcriber. When a scribe appended an additional twelve verses to the end of the Gospel of Mark, this can scarcely be attributed to mere oversight. Some changes of the text function to harmonize it with parallel passages. Others function to eliminate possible grammatical inconformities or exegetical ambiguities or embarrassments. Still others function to heighten clarity or rhetorical force. And a significant number of others, I will argue, function to establish the orthodox character of the text, either by promoting more fully an orthodox understanding of Christ or by circumventing the heretical use of a text in support of an aberrant teaching.

**Answer for yourself:** How many such "intentionally orthodox" modifications actually derive from the second through the fourth century and later; during the time of the production of and canonization of the refutation of Marcion's First New Testament which is literally Rome's Second New Testament?

It proves to be a key question for this study, for although I am interested in changes of the text generated during the Christological debates of the second and third centuries, most of the New Testament manuscripts actually date from the fourth century and beyond. With such sparse evidence from the early period, it is not always possible to locate a particular variant reading in a manuscript of the time. The problem is more apparent than real, however, as most scholars are convinced that this scant attestation is purely a result of the haphazard and fragmentary character of the surviving witnesses. The majority of textual variants that are preserved in the surviving documents, even the documents produced in a later age, originated during the first three Christian centuries and it was during these early centuries that theological debates concerning "Christology" were at their height!

This conviction is not based on idle speculation. In contrast to the relative stability of the New Testament text in later times, our oldest witnesses to the New Testament display a remarkable degree of variation. The evidence suggests that during the earliest period of its transmission the New Testament text was in a state of flux, that it came to be more or less standardized in some regions by the fourth century, and subject to fairly rigid control (by comparison) only in the Byzantine period. As a result, the period of relative creativity was early, that of strict reproduction late. Variants found in later witnesses are thus less likely to have been generated than to have been reproduced from earlier exemplars. Additional evidence for this view derives from the fact that although our earliest witnesses are widely divergent both among

themselves and in relation to the later types of text, they scarcely ever attest individual textual variants that do not also appear in one or another later source. Thanks to the discovery of early papyri during the present century, readings that may have appeared unusual when we had only later witnesses are now known to have occurred early.

**Answer for yourself:** What, then, does this indicate about unusual readings of later sources that do not happen to be attested in the fragmentary remains of the ante-Nicene age? Although the merits of the claim need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis-as will happen in the course of this study - most scholars agree that even such "late" readings are by and large best understood as deriving from documents of the first three centuries, documents that simply have not chanced to survive the ravages of time.

## LET US SUMMARIZE IN CLOSING

The vast majority of all textual variants originated during the period of our concern, the second and third centuries. This was also a period in which various Christian groups were actively engaged in doctrinal conflicts, particularly over Christology. A number of variant readings reflect these conflicts, and appear to have been generated "intentionally." Scribes sometimes changed their manuscripts to render them more patently orthodox, either by importing their Christology into a text that otherwise lacked it or by modifying a text that could be taken to support contrary views.

**Answer for yourself:** Then with most of these textual variants occurring during the second and third centuries then does it not stand to reason that "additions" were made late and not earlier than Marcion and that Marcion's presentation of the First New Testament stand authentic as it exists and that Marcion is innocent of the blasphemous claims of the later "literalists" of "cutting out" existing passages from preexisting documents in his day? It sure would seem so.

*That means many things; the least of which is not that Marcion's and Paul's views concerning the "allegorical Christ" reflected most likely the earliest beliefs of the earliest Christians and the latter refutation of this view is seen in the alterations of these earliest texts has kept from us this understanding today....leading us all into idolatry with the "literal" Christ Jesus...an object of worship in Christianity today because of the altered texts in our current New Testaments from Rome.*





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## DO WE FIND CHRISTIAN CENSORSHIP IN JOSEPHUS?

There is some debate among scholars over the authenticity of certain paragraphs in Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews that reference Jesus:

- **Most scholars believe that the majority of the paragraph is authentic, with a few crucial sentences inserted later by Christian scribes.**
- **Some scholars think that the entire paragraph is a later Christian insertion.**
- **A few scholars believe that the entire passage is indeed authentic, and that Josephus himself wrote it down in the form seen here, without later revision.**

“Jewish Antiquities” was published in Rome in 93 A.D., **but the original manuscripts have been lost.** The earliest surviving copies of “Jewish Antiquities” all contain the disputed passage containing the "Jesus" reference otherwise known as Testimonium Flavianum. There are two quotes that mention Jesus in Josephus' Antiquities: A smaller and a larger one. There is another shorter reference to Jesus in 20.9.1 Testimonium Flavianum is quoted by Eusebius in his History Of The Church in about 324 C.E.

*Any revision to the works of Josephus would have had to occur between 93 and 324 A.D.*

**Answer for yourself:** What is the truth of the matter? Have the works of Josephus been worked over by later Christians and "Jesusized"? Let us investigate for ourselves these three above scholarly stances.

**Answer for yourself:** When do we find the first historical reference to Testimonium Flavianum and the supposed attestation from Josephus that Jesus was the Messiah?

**Eusebius was the earliest commentator to quote the Testimonium Flavianum in 340 C.E.** There are many problems that surround Eusebius. These problems include the allegation (although false) that Eusebius said that pious fraud is acceptable, and that he invented much of his historical evidence such as the Bishop's lists. This in itself is proof enough for most skeptics who reject the Testimonium Flavianum that Eusebius made it up. This is quite possible but in my opinion not probably. Since the earliest quotation of it comes from Eusebius, some skeptics make an argument that this is proof enough that he invented the Testimonium Flavianum. **Yet it is crucial to note that we have other readings that have the same core information about Jesus but lack the same emminadations as we will see below.** This proves, in my opinion, that Eusebius didn't make up the core information about Jesus. It also proves that previous readings existed which lacked the emminadations but which did not lack the mention of Jesus. That builds the probability that Josephus really did mention Jesus. That probability is very high.

**Answer for yourself:** But which of the references in Antiquities are authentic and which ones, if any, were elaborated upon to bolster, enhance, and propagate later Christian theology as attached to Jesus in the selling of Jesus as Messiah to the Gentile world?

**Regardless of Eusebius truthfulness in recounting Josephus in his writings Christians and non-Christians alike realize that this passage is important. Indeed, it is the earliest reference to Jesus outside the New Testament. If what Josephus has said here is true, if Jesus was the Messiah and if he rose from the dead, it makes a big difference in our lives today! The reverse can be said as well.** No other passage in the works of Josephus has provoked as much debate as this one.

Flavius Josephus was the Roman name of Joseph ben Matthias. Josephus, during the second half of the first century AD, produced two long and detailed histories of the Jews and the events leading to the Roman victory in the Jewish Wars, History of the Jewish War and Antiquities of the Jews, but has almost nothing to say about Jesus and many scholars believe that these short references to Jesus are probably added by Christians later when Rome and Christianity took over the editing of religious books after Rome adopted Christianity as the state religion after Constantine.

**Answer for yourself:** Is there any possible way that we can come to any reliable answers concerning the possible forgery of the works of Josephus by Rome where the name of Jesus was possible added by Christian redactors later in history? I believe that there is but it will require some diligent and thorough study on our parts. Are you ready?

## PRELIMINARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Josephus was born in Jerusalem only a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

**Answer for yourself:** What should this fact teach us?

First of all we should remember the Messianic milieu into which Josephus was born and the tumultuous events that befell the citizens of Jerusalem during this time and leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It is not stretching the point to say that there existed in Israel a Messianic hysteria during and up to the eventual destruction of the Temple and without a doubt Josephus would have grown up knowing quite well the Messianic hope of Israel and the many Messianic pretenders to which people attached their failed hopes. To think for a moment that Josephus would not have been very familiar with the events surrounding the life of Jesus let alone his death and crucifixion at the hands of Rome for sedition against the Roman state defies imagination. **So let it be said that as Josephus would later write in his works concerning these failed "messiahs" and that Jesus and the events surrounding his life would have been quite well known by him. This is all the more problematic when we will see later the length to which Josephus goes in detailing the events of these "messianic pretenders" but only gives two short snippets to the events surrounding Jesus and his messianic bid in Israel.**

Josephus's writings show the readers his interest in the Jewish religious groups of the time. He tells us about the Jewish religious parties, about John the Baptist who Christians say was the herald of the Messiah and about Jesus's brother, James, whose death he says was a reason for the start of the War in 66 AD. **But he tells us nothing about the crucifixion of Jesus or how it occurred. It should give you cause to think that a man who was almost contemporaneous with Jesus and his failed messianic bid in Israel and whose reputation was built on detailed histories of the Jewish people fails to mention Jesus as Israel's hoped-for Messiah except in two very brief passages. This gives us our first pause to think if these two references to Jesus in the works of Josephus are genuine.** This fact alone is not enough to prove that the references to Jesus in the works of Josephus are forgeries by later Christian monks and redactors but let it not be forgotten as we progress in our study facts like this because when we are done we will see a much clearer picture that will lead us, in my opinion, to make a sound judgment and conclusion as to the veracity and reliability of these Jesus accounts in Josephus's writings.

The precocious Josephus had studied all the Jewish religious sects before the age of 19 when he decided to become a Pharisee. He became a clerk to the Sanhedrin and at 26 went as an envoy to Rome to plead for some priests sent to Nero by Procurator Felix for trial. With the help of Poppaea, the Empress, who was possibly a



Jewish proselyte or at least a godfearer, he succeeded. He was thus in Rome at much the same time as Paul, the Apostle to the gentiles.

Back in Jerusalem in 64 AD, revolt was simmering. Josephus was patriotic enough but had seen the power and extent of the Empire and knew that rebellion was futile. When the war broke out Josephus was made a general by the Sanhedrin and fought in Galilee with John of Gischala, the Zealot leader of the Galilaeans. Vespasian captured him after the town of Jotapata had been sieged for 47 days and decided to use him as an interpreter. Josephus got on well with Vespasian, predicting that he would become Emperor, which he did. Vespasian asked Josephus to write an account of the Jewish War for his campaign Triumph, a Roman victory parade. It was to be a warning to the people of the East not to try to defy Roman might.

Josephus wrote a draft in his native Aramaic which he called *On the Capture of Jerusalem*. This he polished into his book, the Jewish War. To gather his material, as the appointed historian of the Emperor, he was granted access to official archives, to the Reports of Roman Governors, the campaign diaries of Vespasian and Titus, the Emperor's commentaries and he also corresponded with Agrippa I, for a short while King of Judaea before the war. His work had the ultimate stamp of approval - that of the Emperors themselves.

When Josephus uses official sources it is usually evident. He often tells us who filed the report from which he is quoting and transcribes it verbatim with little effort to paraphrase. Thus even non-signalled passages from official sources can be identified by their style. When writing from experience he is more informal, sounds less official and is less impersonal in the information he imparts.

Our present versions of the Jewish War fails to mention Jesus, John the Baptist or Menehem, who revolted in 66 AD, but they do tell us of Judas of Galilee and Theudas, both messianic nationalist leaders who failed in their messianic hopes.

- From Josephus it appears that in the first century before the destruction of the Temple a number of messiahs arose promising relief from the Roman yoke, and finding ready followers. Josephus speaks of them thus: "Another body of wicked men also sprung up, cleaner in their hands, but more wicked in their intentions, who destroyed the peace of the city no less than did these murderers [the Sicarii]. For they were deceivers and deluders of the people, and, under pretense of divine illumination, were for innovations and changes, and prevailed on the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them in the wilderness, pretending that God would there show them signs of liberty" (Josephus, "B. J." ii. 13, §; 4; idem, "Ant." xx. 8, §; 6). Matt. 24:24, warning against "false Christs and false prophets," gives testimony to the same effect.
- **Judah the Galilean**, about 10 B.C.E., is known to us from Josephus, who identifies him as Pharisaical in overall orientation, but with a strong emphasis on allegiance to G-d alone. He claimed it was shameful to pay tribute to Romans, and founded the movement known as the Zealots to oppose Roman domination. Josephus notes with admiration their determination and bravery, which indeed is legendary, yet it is evident from history that they did not usher in the Messianic age. [Jos., Ant. 18:23].
- **Theudas** led a group of people to the Jordan River, claiming that he would miraculously part the waters before them. According to Acts 5:36 (which seems to refer to a different date), he secured about 400 followers. Cuspius Fadus sent a troop of horsemen after him and his band, slew many of them, and took captive others, together with their leader, beheading the latter [Jos. Ant. 20-97ff]. A religious impostor of this name is also mentioned in the New Testament as an example of cult leaders who come and go. [Acts 5:35-39].
- Josephus also mentions a **Jew from Egypt** who led 30,000 men to the Mount of Olives, opposite Jerusalem, with the intent of forcibly taking Jerusalem from the Romans. He promised that at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down, and that he and his followers would enter and possess themselves of the city. But Felix, the procurator (c. 55-60), met the throng with his soldiery. The prophet escaped, but those with him were killed or captured, and the multitude dispersed. He was intercepted by the forces of the Roman procurator, and Josephus reports that the Egyptian fled, leaving many of his unfortunate followers to be killed in battle. [Jos. Wars, 2:261ff]. [Acts 5:35-39].
- Another messiah, Josephus reports, promised the people "deliverance and freedom from their miseries" if

they would follow him to the wilderness. Both leader and followers were killed by the troops of Festus, the procurator. Even when Jerusalem was already being destroyed by the Romans, a prophet, according to Josephus suborned by the defenders to keep the people from deserting, announced that God commanded them to come to the Temple, there to receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Those who came met death in the flames.

He records that the Jews merely protested when the Romans erected a statue of Caligula in the Temple, an act grossly contemptuous of the Jewish religion. **This is a curiously subdued response for the fanatically religious Jews.** In their outrage, history suggests they must surely have rioted, if not revolted. **Also strange is the omission of the fire in Rome in 64 AD which Nero attributed to the Christians. Such passages smack of censorship because Josephus usually fastidiously records the smallest detail of events relevant to his subject. It looks as though a whole chapter might have been erased by Christian censors because it depicted Jesus and his followers as fomenters of rebellion.** Some manuscripts of the Jewish War contain a passage on Jesus extracted from Josephus's companion volume, the Antiquities of the Jews, proving that someone has tampered with the original text, presumably in an attempt to fill the obvious gap left by the initial excision.

**The inserted passage is favourable towards Jesus even though he was viewed, rightly or wrongly, by the Roman hierarchy as a terrorist. Josephus would have been taking an unlikely risk by making such an assessment. Remember he was a captive who had been adopted by Vespasian and given certain privileges in return for certain duties - privileges which could easily have been withdrawn.** Domitian, who was Emperor when the Antiquities of the Jews was published, could have been no lover of Jesus or his followers. He even ordered all descendants of King David to be rounded up for questioning in an attempt to detect potential rebels and he banished two members of his own family for wanting to be Christians.

## THE JESUS REFERENCES IN JOSEPHUS

In versions of the Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus, edited by Christians, are two passages describing Jesus. **Neither is in the Jewish version of the Josephus's Antiquities.** The longer passage, the so called **Testimonium Flavianum**, is cited by Christians as independent confirmation of Jesus' existence and resurrection.

**Testimonium Flavianum is the only direct discussion of Jesus to be found in the writings of Josephus. Unfortunately, the text as we have it in extant copies of Josephus' Antiquities, as attested to by many scholars, appears to have been dramatically re-written from a Christian point of view. We need to take pause again to remember that the writings of Josephus were brought down to us from antiquity not by the Jewish community, but by the Christians.**

Lets read *Testimonium Flavianum*. Josephus, Antiquities 18.63, probably in a Christian redaction Tr. I. H. Feldman, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 9, pp. 49ff.

*About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not cease. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life. For the prophets of God had prophesied these and myriads of other marvellous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still up to now, not disappeared.*

We have only three Greek manuscripts of this section of Josephus, all from the 11th century.



**Answer for yourself:** Besides the Jewish copy of Josephus that lacks these Jesus references are there other copies of Josephus writings and are in existence today; possibly even earlier than these 11th century copies of Josephus *Testimonium Flavianum* that read somewhat different? Yes there is.

There also exists a copy of this disputed passage in Arabic. Not surprisingly the Arabic quotation of the Josephus passage has a much less Christian flavor. Some scholars have argued that the Arabic version has a more likely claim to originality.

Arabic summary, presumably of Antiquities 18.63. From Agapios' Kitab al-'Unwan ("Book of the Title," 10th c.). The translation belongs to Shlomo Pines. One finds the same reference in James H. Charlesworth, Jesus Within Judaism.

It reads:

*Similarly Josephus the Hebrew. For he says in the treatises that he has written on the governance of the Jews: At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.*

**Answer for yourself:** What do we see when we closely compare these two references; one in Greek and one in Arabic?

As intimated earlier scholars today suggest quite strongly that in existing copies of Josephus' Antiquities the reference to Jesus appears to have been dramatically re-written from a Christian point of view. This becomes all the more clearer when we remember that the writings of Josephus were brought down to us from antiquity not by the Jewish community, but by the Christians.

Scholars, in comparing the Arabic with the Greek *Testimonium Flavianum* say:

- The Arabic quotation of the Josephus passage has a much less Christian flavor (says "believed" to be Messiah instead of "was" the Messiah).
- The Arabic version has a more likely claim to originality; although itself not exempt from possible editing.
- Although editing is highly probable, it should be noted that even the Arabic version is a good deal kinder to Jesus than Josephus usually is to messianic claimants.
- Scholars mention that it is harder to see why the Christian scribe would feel so compelled to change it. It is possible that the original may have been much more insulting, in keeping with Josephus' normal pattern as seen above in his discussion of other failed messianic deliverers, and that the Greek and Arabic versions are simply two different recensions of a Christian rewrite.

Making note of the above we need to look closely at the last sentence in the Arabic version as it is also problematic for us. Some scholars suggest that the last sentence (accordingly ...wonders) is little more than a pious expansion and if removed then we are left with a non-committal report on the martyrdom of a pious Jew at the hands of Rome. This would not be at all inconsistent with Josephus' style, particularly if he discounted as later followers' embellishments the claims made by Christians that Jesus was the Messiah (which he did). Josephus was not a believer in any Messiah let alone Jesus as the messiah. This last suggestion is to some extent crippled by the less controversial reference to James and Jesus that we find in Antiquities 20 if it is genuine.

## JESUS AND THE JAMES PASSAGE IN ANTIQUITIES 20.9.1

The only usually undisputed allusion to Jesus in Josephus is actually only a passing reference in the context of the trial of James.

Let us read this now from Josephus, Antiquities 20.9.1

*Since Ananus was that kind of person, and because he perceived an opportunity with Festus having died and Albinus not yet arrived, he called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought James, the brother of Jesus (who is called 'Messiah') along with some others. He accused them of transgressing the law, and handed them over for stoning.*

James is identified, not as James son of ???? as one would normally expect in typical Jewish speech and writings but as brother of Jesus. This departure from usual Jewish writings (son of so an so) and typical Jewish speech when referencing names of Jewish people betrays the thought process of the later Gentile Christians and not Jews; again betraying that we are reading something that Josephus most likely did not write. While this James reference in Antiquities 20 has a greater chance to be authentic than the one above in Antiquities 18, it is not without problems.

Origen, one of the most distinguished of the Fathers of the early Church, was born, probably at Alexandria, about 182; and died at Caesarea not later than 251. In all of Origen's writings and quotes of others Origen knows and cites this passage from Antiquities 20 (the James reference) but does not reference the much in question Antiquities 18 reference to Jesus (Testimonium Flavianum) above. This indicates strongly that Origen was unaware of the existence of the Jesus reference in Antiquities 18 in his day. Yet to be fair Origen's reference to the James passage (Antiquities 20) provides some evidence for its presence in Josephus's Antiquities before the launching full time of the Christian forgery mill of Rome. So we find in and around 200-250 C.E. that there is a reference most likely to James as the brother of Jesus, the possible Messiah, but most likely there did not exist as of yet the reference to Jesus in what would later become known as Testimonium Flavianum.

**Answer for yourself:** If we can assume that Antiquities 20 might be somewhat authentic or at least much more so than Antiquities 18 then what was Josephus actually saying about Jesus in this James passage?

## JOSEPHUS AND HIS USE OF THE TERM "MESSIAH":

Now we come to a problem that few see. We are so conditioned to read our received religious beliefs and concepts into what we read that often we fail to understand correctly what we do read.

The term "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew word "moshiach", meaning "anointed". In its Jewish context it refers to the new leader (moshiach) who will rebuild the land of Israel and restore the Davidic Kingdom. In a non-Jewish context the word has come to mean a reference to Jesus Christ as the would-be Messiah and Christianity often uses the words Messiah and Christ synonymously. In all thirty-nine instances of its occurring in the Old Testament, it is rendered by the Septuagint as christos. The New Testament records the Greek form "messias" only twice. According to the Old Testament in the Hebrew Scriptures it referred to priests, prophets, and kings who were anointed with oil, and so consecrated to their respective offices. The moshiah is anointed "above all his fellows" (Psalms 45:7), and therefore embraces himself in all the three offices. According to Jews, the Hebrew Bible contains a small number of prophecies concerning a future descendant of King David, who will be anointed as the Jewish people's new leader (moshiach). This leader will rebuild the land of Israel and restore the Davidic Kingdom. The Jewish concept of moshiah (the messiah) has little, if anything, in common with the Christian concept of Jesus Christ as messiah.

To anyone who has ever investigated the subject of Josephus and his views on the Jewish Messiah it is an



understatement to say that Josephus was not a fan of these "would-be" anointed of God; least of which would be Jesus whom he would have considered, like most Jews in that time period, a failed messiah at best since the expected Hebrew prophecies given by the prophets and holy men of old were not fulfilled during or following the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Nor in the lives of anyother (Judah the Galilean, Theudas, the "Jew from Egypt, etc.). In fact in many instances the opposite occurred as Jewish history attests.

I want to draw your attention to both these quotes that mention the "Messiah"; the one in Greek and the one in Aramaic. If you noticed both the Greek version and the Arabic version mention this "anointed one" and refer to him as Messiah with a "capital M." If you know anything about Hebrew these terms for all the anointed of God in the Tanakh were small letters and not capitals. But when we come to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures we find that in one chapter, Daniel chapter 9, the word is translated into the Greek with a capital "M" as in "Messiah" when all the other references were translated as "anointed" with a small initial letter. Only here is the writer carrying an intended meaning with a capital "M" as in "the Messiah. That alone would not be a problem had it not been that there are two different "anointed ones" mentioned in Daniel 9 separated by hundreds of years. So we find that the capitalization of "M" designates this "anointed one" from all others anointed mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures as the eschatological messiah of messiah.

**Answer for yourself:** What are we to make of such a change in the Hebrew Scriptures let alone later references to this change as we find in the Greek Josephus account and the Arabic account?

This change in "messiah" to "Messiah" with a capital "M" is a theological designation from the hands of hellenized Essenes or pseudo-Christians redactors not only in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures but also in the accounts before us of Josephus' works (Greek and Arabic) where these concepts were most likely added as alterations of existing Josephus' texts. Josephus, not only not a believer in Jesus as the Jewish "messiah," surely did not carry any christological ideas concerning the expected Jewish "messiah" as Christianity would later impose as reflected by the use of a capital "M" for the term "messiah." We find proof here of alterations of the works of Josephus based upon theological necessity.

On the other hand, Origen's version contains the unlikely addition in which Josephus also says that it is as punishment for the execution of James that Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. The possibility suggests itself that even Origen's Josephus has undergone Christian reworking, simply of a different variety, in which, perhaps, the insulting Testimonium has been expunged, and James has been introduced as a pious Jewish hero.

So now let us focus on the Josephus account and let us highlight the suspected additions and alterations imposed upon the text.

*Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man **IF IT BE LAWFUL TO CALL HIM A MAN**, for he was a doer of wonders, **A TEACHER OF SUCH MEN AS RECEIVE THE TRUTH WITH PLEASURE**. He drew many after him **BOTH OF THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES. HE WAS THE CHRIST**. When Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, **FOR HE APPEARED TO THEM ALIVE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY, AS THE DIVINE PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD THESE AND THEN THOUSAND OTHER WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT HIM**, and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day (Antiquities 18:63-64)*

Above we saw the *Testimonium Flavianum* where all the words in ALL CAPS are likely interpolations added by Christian copyists over the centuries in an attempt to make Josephus support faith in Jesus as the Christ. We have only three Greek manuscripts of this section of Josephus, all from the 11th century. These phrases, added rather clumsily, appear to be rather obvious additions even to the modern reader in English. Indeed, it is the earliest reference to Jesus outside the New Testament. It is worth noting that in his earlier work, The Jewish War, written shortly after the revolt under the auspices of the Emperor Vespasian, he mentioned neither Jesus, nor John the Baptist, nor James, while in *Antiquities*, written in the early 90s C.E., he mentions all three.

**Though this passage was quoted by Eusebius writing in about 320-340 C.E., earlier Christian writers**

**make no reference to Josephus's commendation of Jesus even when it would have suited them, as they must surely have done had it existed.**

Indeed Origen, writing in about 250 AD, puzzled:

*Though he [Josephus] did not admit our Jesus to be the Christ he none the less gave witness to so much righteousness in James.*

Elsewhere Origen added:

*although [Josephus] disbelieved in Jesus as Christ,*

contradicting the extant text.

**Answer for yourself:** In light of the fact that we have seen that Josephus was not a positive devotee to "would-be" messiah, then do you not find it strange that Origen would mention that Josephus was not a believer in Jesus as "Messiah" yet we find supposedly from Josephus' pen positive references to Jesus as "the" Messiah; especially in the Greek and to a lesser extent in the Arabic version?

**Let us take a second to refocus.** Origen, in 250 C.E., makes mention that Josephus spoke positively of James but definitely was not a believer in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. Yet we find some 70-90 years later this same passage from the pen of Eusebius, known as one of the biggest Christian liars ever, that the passages in question from Josephus are flowing with nicities and accolades toward Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

**Answer for yourself:** How can this be? Simply said Christian forgery accomplishes the task quite well.

The conclusion that any thinking believer would have to make is that theological changes to Josephus had already taken place by 320 C.E. in the now famed Roman Forgery Mill.

**Plainly Origen's EARLIER version of Josephus's works did NOT have the passage to which we are referring, but by 340 C.E. the version used by Eusebius did.**

Jerome's Latin version has the insertion but it is less assertive, rendering *He was the Messiah* by *He was believed to be the Messiah*. **It shows that the text of Josephus has been altered.** St. Jerome quoted from the *Testimonium Flavianum* as saying "he was believed to be the Messiah," rather than "he was the Messiah." This has led many scholars to believe that Jerome knew of another, perhaps older version of the *Testimonium Flavianum* that read differently and lacked the "tweaked" parts of the passage.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you see any similarity between the Arabic copy of *Testimonium Flavianum* and the Jerome's quote of it from Josephus? You should have seen that they both agreed in saying that Jesus was "believed" to be the Messiah instead of "was" the Messiah as the passage read after alterations by Christians monks and redactors.

In the second major twentieth century controversy over the authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*, the erudite Near Eastern studies scholar, Shlomo Pines, tried to argue that the **paraphrase of the Testimonium that appears in a Christian Arabic chronicle dating from the tenth century might be more authentic than the textus receptus Testimonium.** Reaction to Pines' thesis was mixed, but the most important piece of evidence that Pines' scholarship on Christian Semitic sources brought to light was not the Arabic paraphrase of the Testimonium that he proposed was more authentic than the textus receptus, but the literal Syriac translation of the Testimonium that is quoted in a twelfth century chronicle compiled by the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch (1166-1199). **It is this version of the Testimonium, not the Arabic paraphrase of it, that has the greatest likelihood of being, at least in some ways, more authentic than the textus receptus Testimonium because, as noted earlier, this version of the text agrees with Jerome's Latin version of the text in the same crucial regard.** The medieval Syriac Testimonium that Pines uncovered is very strong



evidence for what many scholars had argued since birth of the controversy over the text in the Renaissance, namely that Jerome did not alter the *Testimonium Flavianum* to read "he was believed to be the Christ" but rather that he in fact knew the original version of the Testimonium, which he probably found in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which read "he was believed to be the Christ" rather than "he was the Christ."

**Answer for yourself:** Who would or could have altered it; Jews or Christians? Only the Christians out of theological necessity.

The passage is too pro-Christian. Josephus, a Jew in the pay of the Roman Emperor and at his mercy as a captive, could not possibly praise a man killed—as far as the Romans knew—as a rebel and a threat to Rome. Only a Christian could write this.

**Answer for yourself:** So, what do we find? Not only that the passage was most likely altered and forged but, that later Christians are writing backwards their "theology" and imposing it upon Josephus by declaring through such forgeries that Josephus was a secret Christian in spite of the witness of Josephus' other writings and Origen's testimony that he was a disbeliever in Jesus as Messiah.

The passage sounds very much like Josephus in style. If it is a bald insertion it has been written in a style compatible with Josephus's, but it could be a skilful redaction of a genuine passage. Phrases such as "tribe of Christians" and "wise man" which are typical of Josephus are possibly relics of the original. Christian editors who Christianised the text might have cleverly retained these phrases to keep the flavour of Josephus.

However, because the passage was evidently totally absent in early editions since otherwise it would have been quoted even in an attenuated form, we can conclude that originally Jesus was not mentioned, or, more likely, the reference was too defamatory for Christian bishops to quote owing to Josephus' disdain for Israel's failed messiah and messianic movements!

The Jesus reference as "Messiah" must have been added to *Antiquities* some time between Origen and Eusebius, when Christians got the power to edit books. After the Christians became supreme in the reign of Constantine they planted evidence on Josephus, turning the leading Jewish historian of his day into a witness for Jesus as Christ. Christian redactors found unsuitable references to Jesus or none at all and interpolated brief but suitable references based purely on Christian belief.

So, many Biblical scholars reject the entire *Testimonium Flavianum* as a Christian insertion. Josephus's work will have referred to Jesus but unfavourably.

**Answer for yourself:** But what of the other reference to Jesus in Josephus?

*Antiquities*, does mention both John the Baptist and James, the brother of Jesus as we saw above in *Antiquities* (20.9.1):

*So he [Ananus, son of Ananus the high priest] assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before him the brother of Jesus, he who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others (or some of his companions) and when he had formed an accusation against them, he delivered them to be stoned.*

Many scholars think this too is forged as addressed above. If not it confirms that a previous mention had been made of Jesus. An unfavourable reference to Jesus in the original version by Josephus due to his feelings about failed "messianic hopes" must have been excised to render it publishable but Christian copyists, finding that their crudely censored versions contained no reference to Jesus felt obliged to insert one. So what Origen could not see Eusebius could. More space is devoted to John the Baptist in our editions of the

**Antiquities than to the master whose coming the gospels assure us he was proclaiming.** Again it is untenable to think that the whole Roman war that was motivated by Messianic fever of the Jews would contain only slight references to Jesus as the expected Messiah by the pen of Josephus while at the same time he allowing more much more press for the announcer of the Messiah's coming to Israel.

We need to take note of something very interesting. **The passage giving testimony to Jesus in Antiquities comes during a catalogue of calamities that the Jews experienced at the time of Pilate taking office.** Josephus seems here to be drawing upon official sources and lists Pilate's raising of the standards in Jerusalem and his taking Temple funds to finance the construction of an aqueduct into the city. Then he mentions Jesus and concludes with two incidents in Rome that occurred, according to Tacitus, in 19 AD. This chronology implies that Pilate was governor and Jesus was active much earlier than Christians today believe. The next section of Antiquities has skipped almost two decades to a revolt led by "The Egyptian" (the one that Paul was mistaken for in Acts) in Samaria in 35 AD. **So two tumults in Jerusalem and two incidents in Rome bracket a short paragraph praising Jesus, then there is a jump forward of 15 years to the next strand of the story.** Something looks amiss.

Following the testimonial to Jesus, the first of the two incidents in Rome is introduced by: *"About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder..."* but there follows a description of a woman tricked into intercourse with a man pretending to be a god in the Temple of Isis in Rome, **a passage eight times longer than that allocated to Jesus and of no apparent relevance to the Jews, despite its introduction.**

**Answer for yourself:** Does it seem proper for Josephus to mention such a trivial event as the taking advantage sexually of one young woman in such a fashion to where he pens passages eight times longer than he writes concerning the expected Messiah of Israel?

**Logic requires this introduction to be that of a passage about the tumult accompanying the arrest of Jesus and described in the gospels. This section was deleted in some copies of Josephus and strongly edited and put forward in others so that the ministry of Jesus would not be described as a calamity.**

There are other problems to notice as well. **The passage is peppered with statements and phrases that are obviously Christian. The use of the phrase "on the third day" to describe the resurrection is practically a signature that says "by a christian." The Phrases such as "if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was the Messiah," are clear evidence of Christian tampering. This phrasing seems to have some similarity with Luke, thus leading to a major argument that the forger borrowed his phrasology from the Gospel of Luke.**

**[Let us continue in the second article in this series.](#)**





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## DO WE FIND CHRISTIAN CENSORSHIP IN JOSEPHUS? #2

Late in the first century Josephus wrote his celebrated work, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, giving a history of his race from the earliest ages down to his own time. Modern versions of this work contain the following passage:

*"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day"* (Book XVIII, Chap. iii, sec. 3).

### HAS THE ACCOUNT ABOVE BEEN FORGED BY CHRISTIANS?

For nearly sixteen hundred years Christians have been citing this passage as a testimonial, not merely to the historical existence, but to the divine character of Jesus Christ. And yet a ranker forgery was never penned.

- Its language is Christian.
- Every line proclaims it the work of a Christian writer.
  - "If it be lawful to call him a man." "He was the Christ."
  - "He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him."

These are the words of a Christian, a believer in the divinity of Christ.

Josephus was a Jew, a devout believer in the Jewish faith -- the last man in the world to acknowledge the divinity of Christ.

The inconsistency of this evidence was early recognized, and Ambrose, writing in the generation succeeding its first appearance (360 A.D.) offers the following explanation, which only a theologian could frame: *"If the Jews do not believe us, let them, at least, believe their own writers. Josephus whom they esteem a very great man, hath said this and yet hath he spoken truth after such a manner; and so far was his mind wandered from the right way, that even he was not a believer as to what he himself said; but thus he spake, in order to deliver historical truth, because he thought it not lawful for him to deceive, while yet he was no believer, because of the hardness of his heart, and his perfidious intention."*

Its brevity disproves its authenticity. Josephus' work is voluminous and exhaustive. It comprises twenty books. Whole pages are devoted to petty robbers and obscure seditious leaders. Nearly forty

chapters are devoted to the life of a single king. Yet this remarkable being, the greatest product of his race, a being of whom the prophets foretold ten thousand wonderful things, a being greater than any earthly king, is dismissed with a dozen lines.

**Answer for yourself:** Does that seem somewhat out of place for the style of writing of Josephus mentioned above?

It interrupts the narrative.

**Answer for yourself:** How is that?

**Section 2** of the chapter containing it gives an account of a Jewish sedition which was suppressed by Pilate with great slaughter. The account ends as follows: *"There were a great number of them slain by this means, and others of them ran away wounded; and thus an end was put to this sedition."* **Section 4, as now numbered, begins with these words:** *"About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder."* The one section naturally and logically follows the other.

*Yet between these two closely connected paragraphs the one relating to Christ is placed; thus making the words, "another sad calamity," refer to the advent of this wise and wonderful being (THINK)!*

Evidence attests that the early Christian fathers were not acquainted with the reference to "Christ" in Josephus in their day. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen all would have quoted this passage had it existed in their time. The failure of even one of these fathers to notice it would be sufficient to throw doubt upon its genuineness; the failure of all of them to notice it proves conclusively that it is spurious, that it was not in existence during the second and third centuries.

**Answer for yourself:** Where do we find the first mention of this "Christ" passage in Josephus as mentioned by an early Church father or Church dignitary? Eusebius the "liar"; who else?

As this passage first appeared in the writings of the ecclesiastical historian, **Eusebius, as this author openly advocated the use of fraud and deception in furthering the interests of the church, as he is known to have mutilated and perverted the text of Josephus in other instances, and as the manner of its presentation is calculated to excite suspicion, the forgery has generally been charged to him.** In his *Evangelical Demonstration*, written early in the fourth century, after citing all the known evidences of Christianity, he thus introduces the Jewish historian: "Certainly the citations I have already produced concerning our Savior may be sufficient. However, it may not be amiss if, over and above, we make use of Josephus the Jew for a further witness" (Book III, p. 124).

**Chrysostom and Photius both reject this passage.** Chrysostom, a reader of Josephus, who preached and wrote in the latter part of the fourth century, in his defense of Christianity, needed this evidence in preaching against the Jews' rejection of the Christian Jesus, but was too honest or too wise to use it since knowing then that it was a "forgery". Photius, who made a revision of Josephus, writing five hundred years after the time of Eusebius, ignores the passage, **and admits that Josephus has made no mention of Christ.**

**Modern Christian scholars generally concede that the passage is a forgery.** Dr. Lardner, one of the ablest defenders of Christianity, adduces the following arguments against its genuineness:

- **"I do not perceive that we at all want the suspected testimony to Jesus, which was never quoted by any of our Christian ancestors before Eusebius.**
- **"Nor do I recollect that Josephus has anywhere mentioned the name or word Christ, in any of his works; except the testimony above mentioned, and the passage concerning James, the**



**Lord's brother.**

- "It interrupts the narrative."
- "The language is quite Christian."
- "It is not quoted by Chrysostom, though he often refers to Josephus, and could not have omitted quoting it had it been then in the text."
- "It is not quoted by Photius, though he has three articles concerning Josephus."
- "Under the article Justus of Tiberias, this author (Photius) especially states that the historian [Josephus], being a Jew, has not taken the least notice of Christ."
- "Neither Justin in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, nor Clemens Alexandrinus, who made so many extracts from ancient authors, nor Origen against Celsus, has ever mentioned this testimony."
- "But, on the contrary, in chapter xxxv of the first book of that work, Origen openly affirms that Josephus, who had mentioned John the Baptist, did not acknowledge Christ" (Dr. Lardner, Answer to Dr. Chandler).

**Answer for yourself:** How can you refute what is said above? The evidence is fairly straightforward. Now how can we refute what is said below?

Again Dr. Lardner says: *"This passage is not quoted nor referred to by any Christian writer before Eusebius, who flourished at the beginning of the fourth century. If it had been originally in the works of Josephus it would have been highly proper to produce it in their disputes with Jews and Gentiles. But it is never quoted by Justin Martyr, or Clement of Alexandria, nor by Tertullian or Origen, men of great learning, and well acquainted with the works of Josephus. It was certainly very proper to urge it against the Jews. It might also have been fitly urged against the Gentiles. A testimony so favorable to Jesus in the works of Josephus, who lived so soon after our Savior, who was so well acquainted with the transactions of his own country, who had received so many favors from Vespasian and Titus, would not be overlooked or neglected by any Christian apologist"* (Lardner's Works, vol. I, chap. iv).

**Bishop Warburton declares it to be a forgery:** "If a Jew owned the truth of Christianity, he must needs embrace it. We, therefore, certainly conclude that the paragraph where Josephus, who was as much a Jew as the religion of Moses could make him, is made to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, in terms as strong as words could do it, is a rank forgery, and a very stupid one, too" (Quoted by Lardner, Works, Vol. I, chap. iv).

**The Rev. Dr. Giles, of the Established Church of England**, says:

*"Those who are best acquainted with the character of Josephus, and the style of his writings, have no hesitation in condemning this passage as a forgery, interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian, who was scandalized that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the gospels, or of Christ, their subject. But the zeal of the interpolator has outrun his discretion, for we might as well expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as to find this notice of Christ among the Judaizing writings of Josephus. It is well known that this author was a zealous Jew, devoted to the laws of Moses and the traditions of his countrymen. How, then, could he have written that Jesus was the Christ? **Such an admission would have proved him to be a Christian himself**, in which case the passage under consideration, too long for a Jew, would have been far too short for a believer in the new religion, and thus the passage stands forth, like an ill-set jewel, contrasting most inharmoniously with everything around it. If it had been genuine, we might be sure that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom would have quoted it in their controversies with the Jews, and that Origen or Photius would have mentioned it. But Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian (I, 11), is the first who quotes it, and our reliance on the judgment or even honesty of this writer is not so great as to allow our considering everything found in his works as undoubtedly genuine"* (Christian Records, p. 30).

**The Rev. S. Baring-Gould**, in his Lost and Hostile Gospels, says:

*"This passage is first quoted by Eusebius (A.D. 315) in two places (Hist. Eccl., lib. i, c. xi; Demonst. Evang., lib. iii); but it was unknown to Justin Martyr (A.D. 140), Clement of Alexandria (fl. A.D. 192), Tertullian (A.D.*

193), and Origen (A.D. 230). *Such a testimony would certainly have been produced by Justin in his apology or in his controversy with Trypho the Jew, had it existed in the copies of Josephus at his time.* The silence of Origen is still more significant. Celsus, in his book against Christianity, introduces a Jew. Origen attacks the argument of Celsus and his Jew. *He could not have failed to quote the words of Josephus, whose writings he knew, had the passage existed in the genuine text. He, indeed, distinctly affirms that Josephus did not believe in Christ* (Contr. Cels. i.)."

Dr. Chalmers ignores it, and admits that Josephus is silent regarding Christ. He says: "The entire silence of Josephus upon the subject of Christianity, though he wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, and gives us the history of that period in which Christ and his Apostles lived, is certainly a very striking circumstance" (Kneeland's Review, p. 169).

Referring to this passage, Dean Milman, in his Gibbon's Rome (Vol. II, p. 285, note) says: "It is interpolated with many additional clauses."

Cannon Farrar, who has written in ablest Christian life of Christ yet penned, repudiates it. He says: "The single passage in which he [Josephus] alludes to him is interpolated, if not wholly spurious" (Life of Christ, Vol. I, p. 46).

The following, from Dr. Farrar's pen, is to be found in the Encyclopedia Britannica: *"That Josephus wrote the whole passage as it now stands no sane critic can believe."*

"There are, however, two reasons which are alone sufficient to prove that the whole passage is spurious -- one that it was unknown to Origen and the earlier fathers, and the other that its place in the text is uncertain" (ibid). He refers here to the passage mentioned above: *another sad calamity* made to refer to the Christ.

Theodor Keim, a German-Christian writer on Jesus says: "The passage cannot be maintained; it has first appeared in this form in the Catholic church of the Jews and Gentiles, and under the dominion of the Fourth Gospel, and hardly before the third century, probably before Eusebius, and after Origen, whose bitter criticisms of Josephus may have given cause for it" (Jesus of Nazara, p. 25).

Concerning this passage, Hausrath, another German writer, says it "must have been penned at a peculiarly shameless hour."

The Rev. Dr. Hooykaas, of Holland, says: "Flavius Josephus, the well known historian of the Jewish people, was born in A.D. 37, only two years after the death of Jesus; but though his work is of inestimable value as our chief authority for the circumstances of the times in which Jesus and his Apostles came forward, yet he does not seem to have mentioned Jesus himself. *At any rate, the passage in his 'Jewish Antiquities' that refers to him is certainly spurious, and was inserted by a later and a Christian hand*" (Bible for Learners, Vol. III, p. 27). This conclusion of Dr. Hooykaas is endorsed by the eminent Dutch critic, Dr. Kuenen.

Dr. Alexander Campbell, one of America's ablest Christian apologists, says: "Josephus, the Jewish historian, was contemporary with the Apostles, having been born in the year 37. From his situation and habits, he had every access to know all that took place at the rise of the Christian religion.

"Respecting the founder of this religion, Josephus has thought fit to be silent in history. The present copies of his work contain one passage which speaks very respectfully of Jesus Christ, and ascribes to him the character of the Messiah. *But as Josephus did not embrace Christianity, and as this passage is not quoted or referred to until the beginning of the fourth century, it is, for these and other reasons, generally accounted spurious*" (Evidences of Christianity, from Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 312).

Another passage in Josephus, relating to the younger Ananus, who was high priest of the Jews in 62 A.D., reads as follows:



*"But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent; he was also of the sect of Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all of the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus was dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, **who was called Christ**, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned"* (Antiquities, Book XX, chap. ix, sec. I).

This passage is probably genuine with the exception of the clause, "who was called Christ," which is undoubtedly an interpolation, and is generally regarded as such. Nearly all the authorities that I have quoted reject it. It was originally probably a marginal note. Some Christian reader of Josephus believing that the James mentioned was the brother of Jesus made a note of his belief in the manuscript before him, and this a transcriber afterward incorporated with the text, a very common practice in that age when purity of text was a matter of secondary importance.

The fact that the early fathers, who were acquainted with Josephus, and who would have hailed with joy even this evidence of Christ's existence, do not cite it, while Origen expressly declares that Josephus has not mentioned Christ, is conclusive proof that it did not exist until the middle of the third century or later.

Those who affirm the genuineness of this clause argue that the James mentioned by Josephus was a person of less prominence than the Jesus mentioned by him, which would be true of James, the brother of Jesus Christ. Now some of the most prominent Jews living at this time were named Jesus. Jesus, the son of Damneus, succeeded Ananus as high priest that very year; and Jesus, the son of Gamaliel, a little later succeeded to the same office.

To identify the "James" of Josephus with "James the Just", the brother of Jesus, is to reject the accepted history of the primitive church which declares that James the Just died in 69 A.D., seven years after the James of Josephus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin.

Whiston himself, the translator of Josephus referring to the event narrated by the Jewish historian, admits that James, the brother of Jesus Christ, "did not die till long afterward."

The brief *"Discourse Concerning Hades,"* appended to the writings of Josephus, is universally conceded to be the product of some other writer -- "obviously of Christian origin" -- says the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

## CONCLUSION

Often serious study takes you where you really did not want to go if you get my drift. Having now seriously considered the scholarly evidence of the historical record and the testimony of many scholars it is safe to say that the mention of "Christ" in Josephus is little more than a Christian forgery. One has to stop and ask why this was necessary in the first place. Again pondering such a question when coupled with other facts from our studies as we have seen on this new website often takes us where we had hoped we need not go. I mentioned in the first article that these Josephus reference to Jesus as "the Christ" is the first historical mention of Jesus outside the New Testament. It is the first historical marker that the Jesus of the New Testament is a real person. But when these references are shown to be but Christian forgeries then we are again shaken to come to the same conclusion that our studies had hoped to disprove; namely, that the Jesus of the New Testament is not a real person but a synthesis of personified sun worship, mystery religions, gnosticism, and Judaism.

As we are seeing as we study Gnosticism, the Sophia, the Logos, the Christ, Marcion, and the earliest unforged Pauline Epistles and Marcion's gospel that the earliest Christians were Gnostics which believed in "the Christ"

not as a human being but only a Divine Principle of God that operated not only within the world but within them and bodies as well: Christ in you! The more we study and examine the historical and textual evidences before us we come to the same conclusion over and over; namely, that the earliest Christians were Gnostics that believed in a Spiritual Son of God as "the Christ" and NEVER believed this to be a human being as such. That is why the earliest New Testament given to us by Marcion did not contain any genealogies, virgin birth stories, infancy narratives, etc. The Christ was not a person. That is why the authentic Pauline Epistles teach a non-human Christ. Only with the later forgery of the Pastoral Epistles in Paul's name will we find the anti-Gnostic Paul but again scholarship reveal them as outright Christian forgeries as we find in Josephus. We need to become aware that the earliest Christians understood "the Christ" in only an "allegorical" sense and not in a "literal" sense. This explains the need to fabricate a human Jesus in a historical record by later Christians in their debates not only with Jews who knew better but Pagans as well. In the absence of a historical Christ Jesus proto-Roman Catholics will create one not only by forgery of existing religious documents but by pure invention of them as we find with Irenaeus in 180 C.E. when he refutes the Gnostic First New Testament with a very "literal" Roman Second New Testament. Let us end remembering it is at this time that all of a sudden the 4 Gospels appear which up to now had never been quoted by any Church Father. It is in these Gospels we find the genealogies, virgin birth stories, and a host of infancy narratives. As well it is at this time that we find the Pastoral Epistles of Paul that suddenly appear which put flesh upon "the Christ". All of this was Irenaeus' anti-Gnostic polemic in trying to discredit the earliest Gnostic Christians. The power of Rome and their organizational might will in another century be unstoppable and the "literal Christ Jesus" of the Roman juggernaut will purge out of existence the "allegorical Christ" as God's mediator between Himself and mankind. Every Christian needs to study Gnosticism thoroughly in order to see the purity and simplicity of their understanding of God and realize that it is this "literalism" of Rome which has made Christians today believe in and worship a man instead of God and rendered all as idolators. It is time we learn the truth and repent and truly worship in Spirit and Truth while we yet have time. Blessings...Craig Lyons M.Div.





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## SUETONIUS AND HIS REFERENCE TO CHRIST..."ALLEGORICAL" OR A "LITERAL" CHRIST?

Let us now move to the supposed references to Jesus in secular sources in our search for the historical Jesus of Nazareth outside the New Testament. We have below the testimony of Suetonius (c. 69-122 CE) who was a Roman historian and lawyer. In his The Lives of the Caesars, Suetonius writes:

*"Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (Emperor Claudius in 49 CE) expelled them from Rome." (Claudius 5.25.4)*

**Answer for yourself:** Is this a reference to Christ Jesus...the historical Jesus Christ of the New Testament?

A second quote does not mention Jesus, but refers to Christians being persecuted under Nero.

*"Punishment [by Nero] was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition."*

**It should be noted however that some scholars doubt the historicity of these texts.**

**Answer for yourself:** Does these passage really refer to a historical Jesus?

Here is but one of many key objections to using this passage to refer to a historical Jesus. "Chrestus," as Suetonius spells it, is the correct Latin form of a true Greek name, so that some would say that it does **NOT** refer to Jesus Christ. Some suggest and assume that "Chrestus" was some kind of Jewish agitator who had no association with Christianity, perhaps a semi-Zealot reacting to plans by Caligula to put a statue of Zeus in the Jewish Temple but there is no evidence for this. **As for the spelling issue, some point out that Suetonius spells "Christians" correctly, so it is unlikely that he misspelled "Christus" (THINK)!**

**Answer for yourself:** Is "Christus" a reference to "the Christ?"

Some may find support for this in that Suetonius' sentence literally refers to "the instigator," not actually "the instigation." Some make mention that name "Chrestus" is otherwise unattested among the Jews.

**Answer for yourself:** But is it really? More on that later.

Some have suggested that the reference is to Jesus, but that Suetonius altered the name he heard to that of a common slave name.

Theories abound but we have only to look closely at "Chrestus" and other historical references to find our answer.

## LETS SUMMARIZE WHAT HE HAVE LEARNED IN PRIOR ARTICLES

Marcion amplified Paul's criticism of Judaism; something we should expect since Marcion believed that only Paul understood correctly the message of "the Christ." He wrote a famous treatise called *Contradictions*, setting out all the differences between the God of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament. As a way of distancing Jesus from the figure of the Jewish Messiah, Marcionites, and others with a similar perspective, claimed to follow "Jesus Chrestos" (Jesus the Good) rather than "Jesus Christus" (Jesus the Messiah). (B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*, 1987, p. 321). From as early as the middle of the first century through to the fifth century we hear of those calling themselves "Chrestians" rather than "Christians". Several Gnostic groups are known to have referred to Jesus not as Christ, but as Crestus, "the Good" (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 249). According to Suetonius (*Life of Claudius*, 25), in a text assumed to refer to Christians causing trouble in Rome in the middle of the first century, these Jews are said to be followers of Crestus ("the good").

**Answer for yourself:** Since these followers of "the Christ" were accused of be troublemakers does it stand to reason that they would try to defend themselves by bring attention to the fact that they are really "good" and not "bad" people? It sure would and this is the meaning of changing the "Christ" to "the Good". For them being Christians was "good" **(THINK).**

## "CRESTUS"...A REFERENCE TO THE Gnostic CHRIST...THE ALLEGORICAL CHRIST AND NOT THE HUMAN CHRIST

**Answer for yourself:** Since we found out that "Crestus" is another name for the "allegorical" Gnostic Christ and that riots over this "allegorical Christ" and non-human "Christ" occurred in Rome then how in the world could this be a "human Jesus" or a "human Christ"? It could not!

This again destroys any hope that these riots over "Crestus" in Rome was over a human being or a human "Christ" as some apologists and anti-Gnostics assert.

An inscription found in a Syrian Marcionite church dated 318 CE reads: "The Lord and Saviour Jesus the Good" - Chrestos, not Christos. In the earliest New Testament we possess, the Codex Sinaiticus (late fourth century) three passages - Acts 11:26, 26:28, 1 Peter 4:16 - use the name "Chrestian" for Christian (THINK)!

Profoundly influenced by Plato as they were, the Gnostics probably chose this name as Plato had used it as the highest definition of God.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find a trace of this "Crestus" in the gospel accounts? Yes.

A trace of this is left in the gospels where Jesus echoes the words of Pythagoras, who was called "wise" and responded: "Why do you call me wise" No one is wise but God." In the gospels Jesus responds to being called "good" in similar fashion: *"Why callest thou me good" There is none good but one, that is, God."* (*Matthew 19:17.*) This novel twist must have delighted readers of the Gnostic texts.





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## THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "CHRISTIAN"

The historical records about Marcion's contact with Gnostics is very meager. We learn that Marcion is a Gnostic not only by the testimony of the Early Church Fathers that opposed his religious beliefs but from the collection of documents that originally comprised the First New Testament.

According to a reasonable interpretation of the chronological evidence, Polycarp (while a bishop of Smyrna) was writing in AD 115 about the extensiveness of Marcion's teachings in Asia Minor (*Pol. Phil. 2:18,19*). **What we fail to realize is the extensiveness of Marcion's religious beliefs as shared with other believers who constituted the "first" Christians. The "first" Christians were Gnostic Christians and not of the later "Western Christianity".**

About the year AD 138, Justin Martyr (a resident of Rome) wrote about Marcion's unusually long and effective teaching career. Understand that the polemics of the Early Church Fathers are often harsh and untrue regarding those that they attacked as being "heretics". That being said we need to listen closely to what is said by Justin Martyr in and around 150 C.E. Justin is known as the first Christian apologist, called also Justin the Philosopher. Born in Samaria of pagan parents, he studied philosophy, and after his conversion in Ephesus to Christianity at about the age of 38, he went from place to place trying to convert men of learning by philosophical argument. He opened a school of Christian philosophy at Rome, where he and some disciples were finally martyred under Marcus Aurelius for practicing an unauthorized religion. Of his writings (in Greek), only two undisputed works remain, the Apology (with an appendix called the Second Apology) and the Dialogue.

Now let us listen very carefully to what Justin has to say.

"And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. **All who take these opinions from these men are, as we before said, called Christian**" (Justin's [First] *Apology*. I.26. *ANF*. vol. 1. p. 171). The reason for dating this statement to the year AD 138 is discoverable in Blackman's study (Marcion and His Influence, p. 21).

**What you should take notice of is not that Justin had an extreme dislike for those that did not agree with his religious belief system but the fact that those who revered Marcion and were like Gnostic believers in "the Christ" were recognized as early as 140 C.E. as "Christians" even by their opponents. What we have here is an "in-house" debate and disagreement on just who this "Christ" really is. We call this Christology today.**

**One of the most startling things in Justin's unfavorable review of Marcion is the surprising appearance of the word "Christians" as a commonly used title to describe the members of Marcionite churches. By AD 138, Marcionites could be found in "every nation."**

# THE CHRISTIAN "CHRIST" OR "CHRESTOS"?

At this early time, there is some confusion about the correct spelling for "Christian." It is known that Marcion preferred to call Jesus the "Chrestos" (which means the Kind or Helpful One). The spelling for "Chrestos" (the Good one) is derived from an ancient inscription to a Marcionite synagogue (Daniel Jon Mahar, English Reconstruction and Translation of Marcion's version of To The Galatians, p. 1).

Let us take note of the fact that those "orthodox" believers who were more allied with the Roman Ecclesia and who were opposed to Gnostic Christianity were already at this time proudly bearing the title "Catholic." By the time when *The Acts of the Apostles* was formally published about the middle of the Second Century, the word "Christian" had become very popular as a designation for believers in Jesus. Because of this, there was needed some kind of explanation about its origin.

We are all familiar with the word "Christian" but it will surprise you to know that this is not the designation by which the earliest believers in "the Christ" were known:

- Not many know that the Sinaiticus manuscript has a peculiar way of spelling the word Christian. Everywhere this title appears, that Fourth Century manuscript spells it "Chrestian".
- Vaticanus, a manuscript of the same age, utilizes a slightly transitional spelling "Chresitian".

This surely is strong evidence about Marcion's real role. Not only is Marcion's original spelling for "Christian" still evident in such important manuscripts, this also indicates directly the strength and extent of Marcionite effects on the entire Christian community, including its scholars; even as late as the fourth century!!!

There is still some bifurcation between the words "Catholic" and "Christian" today.

## LET HISTORY SPEAK TO US AND LET US LISTEN CAREFULLY

In AD 49, Rome experienced disturbances in the Jewish community that had been provoked by the preaching of "Chrestus" (based on the account of Suetonius in J. Steven's New Eusebius, no. 2, p. 1).

*Acts 18:2 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto them. (KJV)*

It seems notable at this time (C.E. 49) that "Jews" in general were expelled, and not simply followers of "Chrestus" or "Chrestians."

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this important and what should we learn from this?

The reason why all the Jews were expelled from Rome at this very early date is that the Roman authorities did not or could not clearly differentiate between the Christians and the Jews (Wilson, Marcion... p. 25). It was over disturbances involving this "Chrestus" that Rome expelled them from the city. Notice how early this is; we are talking about 49 C.E. and the existence of "Chrestus" as this early date. If we can come to understand just who or what "Chrestus" refers to at this early date then we will have an accurate picture of what these Jews or earliest believers actually had "faith in" that prompted Rome to rid themselves of them. The presence of the Gentile title "Chrestus" in Rome implies also the presence of an accompanying Gentile-oriented religious



belief as well. So we are actually looking at both Jews and Gentiles who had a faith concerning "Chrestus".

Nobody knows how the Church of Rome was established. Neither the Book of Acts nor the writings of the early Fathers explain how Christianity arrived in Rome. As has been discovered, Suetonius, the Roman historian, mentions the expulsion of followers of Chrestus from Rome, during the time of Emperor Claudius c. AD 40-50. This indicates that a flourishing Christian community existed in Rome, even before Paul went to Corinth or Ephesus in AD 49. By the time of Nero (AD 54-68), the Christian community in Rome was already of a considerable size.

**Answer for yourself:** How did Christianity reach Rome at that very early date and before Paul? Could this "Christianity" we see be something other than what we have come to understand Christianity today? You bet it was. Long before Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles ever went to Rome we find there in that city a belief in "Chrestus" and the Divine Logos within each person which unites him with God. What we find here is that we have in fact Jewish and Gentile Gnosticism instead of a historical Jesus as a form of the later expression of Christianity in Rome which transforms this spiritual "Christ" into a historical Christ as previously seen in the Second New Testament. This is further testimony that the earliest expression of what we call "Christianity" was not a faith in a historical Jesus or a historical Christ but one in the Spiritual Mediation of the "Chrestus". This Gnostic faith held in common a belief that within all men dwelled God's Spirit whom they called "Chrestus". We call it "the Christ" today. But understand back then they did not see nor understand this "Chrestus" to be a human being as we have come to understand it today.

In Vaticanus and Sinaiticus it is not possible to discover how Jesus' main title (Christ) was spelled. A scribal device called "nomina sacra" was employed as a emphatic technique to highlight special words. The highlighted words were shortened. Because of this, the scribes left out the main vowel every time. Most Greek editions restore the vowel as an iota ("i").

By making a back formation from the Sinaiticus' "Chrestian," the word "Chrestos" appears as the proper title for belief in Jesus. Through this logical method, it can be reasonably argued that Jesus' normal title should be fully spelled "Chrestos" throughout Sinaiticus.

Besides the two oldest Greek New Testaments from the Fourth Century, and in addition to the oldest dated church inscription (C.E. 318), there is an abundance of ancient testimony that shows that the title "Chrestus" for Jesus was very popular among "common" Christians.

As if we don't have enough testimony already to see without a doubt that the earliest Jewish and Gentile believers had a faith in "Chrestus" we only have to look at the two titles "Chrestus" or "Chrestian" which we find also recorded in the following written sources:

- Tertullian (C.E. 210), The Eighth Sibyl (C.E. 200)
- Theophilus of Antioch (C.E. 170)
- Marcus (C.E. 145) *Apocalypse of Elijah* (AD 100),
- Suetonius (AD 124) and
- Tacitus (AD 116).

There is even a disputed inscription (now lost) from Pompei (AD 79) that is believed to have contained a reference to this lost title of Jesus.

The ruling theologians of orthodoxy denounced the spelling "Chrestus" as based on ignorance. Lactantius (AD 310) said: "The ignorant are accustomed to call Him 'Chrestus'" (ANF. Vol. 7, p. 106).

**Answer for yourself:** But was it just ignorance or could "Chrestus" have a special meaning that we are overlooking?

Let us now take note that the Gnostic Marcion, who as typical Gnostic believers did not believe in a human Christ but a Docetic Christ, used the term "Chrestus" in the oldest New Testament which he collected and produced.

The theological reason for the Orthodox scribes carefully and stealthily introducing the word "Christ" as Jesus' main title for "Chrestus" is explainable for several different reasons:

- First they were obscuring the fact that the earliest believers in the "Chrestus" understood this as a Divine religious concept only and not as a human being.
- Secondly we look to the etymology of the word "Christ". "Christ" in Greek means "anointed" (or royal). This meaning matches that of the Hebrew word "Messiah." The Church Fathers preferred their understanding of this Divine Mediator designated by them as the historical Jesus to be known as Israel's coming King. The Jews of course reject this concept and view and maintain even today that the true Hebrew Scriptures have not been fulfilled and they yet await the coming of a human anointed Messiah from the line of David.

Paul put his Gnostic Christ Jesus in the forefront of his preaching, and they [the early Gentile churches] can hardly have done otherwise. It is no accident, indeed, that over time the true understanding of this Divine Mediator as a Divine Concept as the indwelling Logos as held and taught by the earliest Jewish and Gentile believers to whom we look as the earliest Christians were really "Chrestus-ians" instead. **They held completely opposite views concerning this Divine Mediator between God and man than what the later "orthodox" Roman Christians would hold as seen when they changed the name of "Chrestus" to "Christ" and in so doing changed the Gnostic "Christ" into a human being whom is known today as "the Christ" and not "Chrestus".** We lose completely by changing this name the original concepts of the Logos, Sophia, Hochmah, Holy Spirit, etc. Again over time and the manipulation of the words "Chrestus" and "Christ" the adherents of the new faith were now called and recognized as Christians" (Arthur Cushman McGiffert, The God of the Early Christians, p. 44).





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## INTRODUCTION TO GNOSTICISM

Since the inner core of Gnosticism, even its expression in Christian Gnosticism, originates in a rather specific kind of "spiritual" experience, it follows that those who lack this experience readily misunderstand Gnostic insights. A mistaken notion occasionally held even by scholars is that because of its diversity of imagery and mythology, Gnosticism cannot be regarded as a coherent tradition, or "ism." This misapprehension has a long history. In the second century, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, a fierce opponent of the Gnostics, attacked them for their spiritual and literary creativity, accusing them of producing a new gospel every day. Implicit in his statements was the view that where such a wealth of diverse imagery, myth, and teaching exists there can be no coherent doctrine equivalent to the dogma and canon of the mainstream Christian church. What critics from Irenaeus to contemporary scholars lose sight of is that Gnostic teaching is the direct result of the experience of gnosis.

Such an experience, on the other hand, seldom if ever lends itself to uniform, dogmatic formulations after the fashion of orthodox theology. Still, in spite of the refreshing absence of such formulations, **there is a common or core teaching in Gnosticism that reflects a common or core gnostic experience.**

Many people in recent decades, and indeed since the latter half of the nineteenth century, have turned to Eastern religions in search of teachings and practices with less dogma and more inspiration. They have probably had no inkling that just such an alternative exists closer to home and that it is called Gnosticism. Neither have they seemed aware of the parallels between Gnostic and Eastern insights into reality, the soul, and the need for enlightenment. Some of these people have been responsible for implanting ideas from the East into the minds of the Gnostics. Others have suggested, with equal plausibility, that some Eastern schools of thought, particularly Mahayana Buddhism, may have been influenced by Gnostic ideas. Once again, the most important common element joining East and West in this regard is apparently the experience of gnosis.

Gnosis in the East or in the West is still gnosis, and in a very real sense that is what truly matters. Contrary to the views of some, the term *Gnosticism* is not an empty box into which one can place whatever one wants. **Rather, the Gnostic tradition is based on the experience of gnosis and is characterized by certain attitudes toward life and reality and by certain myths and teachings concerning the origins and nature of the cosmos and the human being that are the result of this same experience. These characteristics set Gnosticism apart as a distinct and unbroken tradition that we can define and trace throughout the ages and across many cultures. Our focus in this website will be the unbroken tradition of Gnosis as found when one begins with Egypt and traces this Gnosis down through history and finding its culmination for our purposes in first century Judaism and Christianity.**

## THE EXPERIENCE OF GNOSIS

The term *gnostikos*, meaning "Gnostic" or "knower," does not seem to have been used often in the first centuries A.D. **Most simply called themselves Christians, although there also existed a non-Christian school of Gnosis known as Hermeticism.** It is widely agreed, however, that the people in question were aspirants toward and partakers of an experience that brought them a liberating acquaintance with Divinity and

with the intricacies and predicaments of the human condition. By what specific means the knowers came by their knowledge scholars today are in no position to recount. Jung stated repeatedly that the scriptures of the Gnostics bear testimony to mystical-psychological experiences of a very impressive order and that what was called gnosis was undoubtedly a psychological knowledge whose contents derived from the insights of the archetypal psyche. Gershom Scholem, the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, spoke of this experience as a mystical esotericism based on acquisition of a higher knowledge of things heavenly and divine. Scholem was also greatly impressed by the preoccupation of second-and third-century Gnostics with ascending through the spheres of the planets to a realm beyond the earth and the cosmos, thus returning in consciousness to their true spiritual home in the fullness of the divine Light-**a return that signified redemption in the Gnostic tradition.** These "heavenly flights" are perhaps the central metaphor for the liberating and sanctifying knowledge to which these people aspired.

The monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in their mainstream manifestations have placed much emphasis on faith. "I believe" (*credo*) is the central affirmation of much of the conventional religious mind. In contradistinction, the Gnostic mind aspires to, and eventually attains, not faith but a certain interior knowing that liberates one from unconsciousness and eventually transports one beyond the bounds of manifest existence itself. This state very likely has certain advantages over mere faith, or belief. William James, the great American philosopher-psychologist, remarked that to most people faith means having faith in someone else's faith. In the minds of many religious folk, faith has thus devolved into a belief received secondhand from other believers, none of whom are likely to have had any experience of the object of their faith.

Faith is a very different mode from knowledge, so it is fairly easy to understand why conventional religion is so different from Gnosticism. A certain kind of faith (*pistis*) is recognized as valid in Gnosticism, but it is faith in one's experience, an abiding faithfulness that one feels toward one's experience of inner, liberating knowledge. The Gnostic divine feminine figure, Sophia, is called Pistis (Faith) because in all her adversities she remains faithful to her vision of the light. In all instances, there occurs a significant altering of consciousness that transports the knower beyond the limitations of personal consciousness and, indeed, beyond the limitations of the very world we live in. Harold Bloom, in his book Omens of Millennium, aptly characterizes the principal disclosures of the experience of gnosis as

- **acquaintance with a God who is unknown to and remote from the world, a God in exile from a false creation and**
- **recognition that one's deeper nature was no part of creation (or the Fall) but was and still is part of the fullness that is God. This God is more human and also more divine than any worshipped in the world.**

**The early Christians used the term *gnosis* to mean knowledge (of God and of self; the God within) by personal acquaintance.** St. Paul the Apostle used the term frequently in reference to the knowledge of God that human beings may have. One of the clearest statements he made concerning the visionary and perhaps even visual character of gnosis is in his second letter to the Corinthians (4.6):

***"God. . . has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge [gnosis] of the glory of God in the face of Christ."***

Another Gnosticizing (that is, akin to Gnostic) apostle was St. John, who frequently wrote of knowing (*gignoskein*) God or Christ. Anyone who reads the beautiful Gospel of John is struck by its similarity to the poetic and visionary style of the writings of the Gnostics. The emphasis of much New Testament literature on gnosis is the source of the prominence that both mainstream Christian mystics and Gnostics have given to the word *gnosis*.

An insightful contemporary scholar, Dan Merkur, in his work Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions, suggests that the experiential sources of gnosis are found in two interrelated kinds of experiences:

- **One of these is a distinct type of visionary experience that discloses the ultimate Spiritual**



realities, albeit manifest in personal mental experiences and thus varying to some extent from individual to individual.

- The other concerns experiences of mystical union.

The Gnostics themselves did not regard these visions as extrasensory perceptions of external data existing on higher "planes," as similar perceptions were understood by nineteenth-century occultists. Nor did they regard them as allegorical representations of abstract ideas, as might have been common among the more mystically inclined Greek philosophers. Rather, the Gnostics seem to have walked a razor-edged path between clairvoyant quasi-objectivity and philosophical, allegorizing subjectivity. Thus, in spite of a common core of meaning and direction, the accounts of the Gnostics' experiences are varied and diverse.

Students of the mystical experience frequently distinguish between what they refer to as visionary and unitive mystical states, the former being descriptive, the latter denoting divine union. It would seem that the ancient Gnostics partook of both. Gnostic visions frequently included heavenly ascensions (Paul's example), but other kinds of visions, such as ecstatic deaths, were in evidence also. These "ecstatic deaths" were not literal and this needs explanation. One died to the created world and ascended through the aeonial regions, engaging in discourses with the denizens of these realms.

*2 Cor 12:2-4 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

*3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (KJV)*

The Gnostics, like Paul, apparently knew these visions to be at least partly intrapsychic and gave them a special status. They described them as experiences in which the "divine spark" (*pneuma*) resident in the individual joined with the reality of the higher worlds. Like other mystics, the Gnostic seers understood the unitive experience as a conjunction (*unio mystica*) with either a divine being (Sophia, Christ) or the spiritual essence of the ultimate Godhead.

*Eph 2:6 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

The synthesis of such visionary and unitive experiences can be characterized as gnosis.

## GNOSIS AND GNOSTICISM

To define Gnosticism as the sum of the beliefs of certain "second-century sects" who were "dualists, and rejectors of the world", as made by the majority of the early Church Fathers, appears neither helpful nor accurate. Neither does the definition of *gnosis* as "knowledge of the divine mysteries reserved for an elite" seem particularly informative. Some insightful scholars in the field have noted that such definitions, as well as some other statements about the Gnostics that pop up in many books, are perpetuations of the skewed perspective of Christian heresiology. From this viewpoint, one is really interested in Gnosticism not on its own terms but only as it aroused the ire of a group of fanatical persons eighteen hundred years ago. Many of the old heresiologists' statements against Gnostics and Gnosticism appear discreditable and even somewhat silly today. The notion that Gnosticism was in the main a patchwork of teachings from various sources extant at the time has been discredited. More and more contemporary scholars agree with Jung, who recognized that the Gnostic scriptures were indeed based on their authors' direct experiences with original images of mysterious beings and regions in the Spirit realm. Neither does the forthright critique of the Old Testament God, which the Gnostics voiced so frequently, appear particularly sacrilegious to contemporary people, who are often nourished on the ideas of Nietzsche or the death-of-God theologians, such as Althizer and Hamilton. In the light of the evidence now available, few would agree with the church

**fathers who portrayed Gnosticism as a purposefully anti-Christian heresy, a diabolic perversion of Christianity worthy of every kind of condemnation.**

**The heresiological bias has colored the view of most writers and preachers concerning Gnosticism for an exceedingly long time; really since Justin Martyr and Irenaeus in the later second century.**

While it is true that the anticlerical tendencies of the Enlightenment and the several occult revivals of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries spawned a good deal of sympathy for the Gnostics, **the old bias emanating from the early Christian critics remained.** It was not until after the discovery and translation of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic scriptures that the climate regarding Gnosticism underwent an ever accelerating benign change. Now, at the outset of the twenty-first century, it is finally possible to give an exposition of Gnosticism without meeting the overwhelming opposition of the bias that has ruled our culture for far too long.

**Answer for yourself:** What then is Gnosticism, and what is its relationship to the experience of gnosis and what role did it serve in Rome's refutation of the earliest New Testament?

Human consciousness does not function in a conceptual vacuum. Visionary and unitive experiences of the mind necessarily translate into a conceptual framework that fits their content and import. **From visions and ecstasies are born religious doctrines, philosophical constructs, and theological and theosophical conceptions. It has been so ever since the times of the primeval shamans, and so it was with the Gnostics of the early Christian centuries.** The difference between mainstream religiosity of whatever kind, on the one hand, and Gnosticism, on the other, lies in what happens to their respective systems after the initial codification of revelatory experiences. While conventional religions apparently are satisfied with the accounts of their founding experiences recorded in sacred scripture, Gnostics have always sought further expansions and amplifications of the initial experiences of gnosis. Gnostics were never primarily believers in someone else's gnosis but were inclined to **add to the insights** of their founders and teachers through their own experiences. And, crucially, such a continuing process of gnosis required a conceptual framework in which the new experiences would find their meaningful place. **This conceptual framework or worldview, within which gnostic experiences have always found their place, became known as Gnosticism.**

An early normative Gnostic statement defines the content and implications of gnosis:

- **What makes us free is the gnosis**
  - **of who we were before we were to inhabit flesh and matter (bodies)...(Spiritual entities cohabiting with God in "Heaven")**
  - **of what we have become (separated from God in the realm of matter)**
  - **of where we were (with God in the beginning)**
  - **of wherein we have been cast of whereto we are hastening (alienated from God in this physical realm and our return to God after death)**
  - **of what we are being freed (separation and alienation from God in these fleshly bodies)**
  - **of what birth really is (rebirth or resurrection is the awareness of the spiritual reality of our "self" which has forgotten who we were and from where we have come and to where we return)**
  - **(Excerpta de Theodoto)**

The person who intuitively receives accurate answers to these questions has received liberating gnosis. The combination of these questions with their answers could be said to constitute Gnostic doctrine and to be the essential core not only of gnosis but of Gnosticism; even the earliest expression of Gnosticism that we find in the earliest Christians.

Contemporary inquirers into these matters might assume that there can be gnosis without Gnosticism, that a person can experience visions and unions without adopting the Gnostic worldview. The ancient Gnostics, as well as their contemporary followers, might respond that while this is possible, it does not lead to productive results.



**Answer for yourself:** What is the good of having unusual experiences without an appropriate context in which to understand them? The tradition of Gnosticism developed on the basis of such experiences in the first place and is uniquely suited to facilitate further Gnostic experiences. Clearly, gnosis and Gnosticism are intimately and usefully linked and, in fact, cannot safely be separated.

Today we know that the Gnostics always emphasized understanding and the insights derived from understanding. This understanding was not common and mundane but embodied a higher knowledge, a more profound insight into things divine and human, than is ordinarily available to faith or to philosophy. Like mystics in other traditions, the Gnostics held that this saving knowledge does not arise merely from rational processes of thought based on the memorization of phrases (even though sacred) or the study of books; nevertheless, like other mystics, they composed documents amplifying their visionary insights and attempting to communicate them to others. These texts proclaim the existence of a transcendent and totally benign God, a substratum of reality that is unchanging and immeasurable, transcending any particularity or limiting imposition one might attribute to it. It goes without saying that this God image is quite incompatible with the image of an arbitrary, tyrannical personal God in whom, to say the least, good and evil seem to be liberally mixed (as we see often in the Old Testament).

From this ultimate essentiality the sparks or spirits that are the essence of human souls come forth, and to it they seek to return. Each spirit entity is a pure spark or atom of divine consciousness and is of the same essence as God. Yet though these sparks are ontologically united with the Divine, they are existentially separated from it. This separation needs to be undone, for as a biblical phrase expresses it, "our hearts are ever restless until they find their rest" in God. A certain painful, often indistinct, longing for something greater, more meaningful, and more enduring than can be experienced in earthly embodiment is the beginning of the undoing of this great separation. Liberating gnosis, resulting in transcendent consciousness, is the effective end of the separation.

Such was and continues to be the vision of the Gnostics. The essential components of this vision are few in number and simple in nature; its detailed implications are more numerous and complex. Let us turn now to the consideration of these details as our introduction to the early Christians and their Gnosticism continues.



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## THE GNOSTIC WORLDVIEW & EARLY CHRISTIANITY

As mentioned in the prior article at the core of Gnosticism is a specific spiritual experience, grounded in vision and union, that does not lend itself to the language of theology and philosophy, but instead has a close affinity to and expresses itself through myth. In this context, the term *myth* does not mean stories that are not true, but rather, stories that embody truths of a different order than the dogmas of theology or the theories of philosophy. Myths were held in high regard in the ancient world. Though they lost esteem in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they are increasingly being rehabilitated in our day. A minor mythic renaissance took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, facilitated largely by C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell. Their work fostered the widespread understanding that the meanings present in mythologies, ancient and otherwise. Thus today we are in a much better position than a century ago to appreciate the mythic message of the Gnostics. This article presents some of the principal motifs of the Gnostic myths. Since of necessity this presentation must be in prose and not in the poetic and imaginative language of the original sources, some of the appeal and beauty of the myths are lost.

### GOD AND COSMOS

Most religious and philosophical systems recognize, in one form or another, that the world is imperfect. Where they differ is in what they suggest should be done about it. There are 2 basic answers to this problem; some blame man while some blame a "lesser" God or "spirit". In many traditions, humanity is made out to be the villain. Mainstream Judeo-Christian thought, for instance, holds that the transgression of the first human pair precipitated a fall, not only of the human race but of all creation. The flaws and evils of earthly life are considered the consequences of this fall. Some extreme environmentalists espouse a position that seems like a latter-day secular translation of the doctrine of the Fall. Human beings are seen as the despoilers, the original sinners who perennially destroy the natural paradise. Gnostics have a perhaps unique and startling view of these matters: they hold that the world is flawed because it was created in a flawed manner.

Gnosticism begins with the recognition that earthly life is filled with suffering and impermanence. "Life is hard and then you die" is an adage that Gnostics agree with, although they might modify and thus offset the first part. All forms of life consume other forms to nourish themselves, thereby visiting pain, fear, and death upon one another. This truth pertains even to herbivorous animals, who live by destroying the life of plants. In addition, so-called natural catastrophes-earthquakes, floods, fires, droughts, volcanic eruptions, plagues-bring suffering and death in their wake. The more complex an organism is, the keener is its sense of suffering and distress.

To face these alarming facts squarely is not easy. Most human beings have a strong psychological need to perceive life as in some sense benign and potentially happy. Gnostics (and Buddhists) have often been labeled pessimists and world haters because of their willingness to look the dark face of the world in the eye. Yet, both of these traditions affirm that there is a way out of suffering and ignorance, and that this way out



**involves an essential, salvific change in consciousness.**

As long as a person will not raise his or her consciousness beyond the physical world to higher, spiritual realities, the soul's enslavement in darkness-whether darkness in the outer, physical world or in the world of the mind-continues. It is as though the body and the mind were bars of a cage in which the soul (or spirit) is trapped. When the captive entity exits the cage and flies aloft, it rises to spiritual realms where ultimate meaning and happiness abide. Soaring through these regions, it finally reaches its primordial home, the Divine (Stephen A. Hoeller, Gnosticism: New Light On Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing, Quest Books, 2002, p. 15).

Describing Gnostics as pessimists is valid only if one maintains that the physical and personal psychological realms are the only realities. Regrettably, this view underlies much contemporary secular thought in our culture. In contrast to this view, the Gnostics assign a high value to the self-liberating potential of transcendental consciousness.

The reader may be familiar with Plato's renowned analogy of the cave. Prisoners held in the cave, being unable to see outside, mistake shadows on the wall of the cave to be reality. The light that is the source of the shadows, however, is the true reality and what they were seeing and perceiving as the "truth" and the "ultimate reality" turned out not to be; only a reflection of the "real". Although this "idea" is credited to Plato we find it in the Hebrew Scriptures:

*Exod 25:9 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (KJV)*

So what we learn is that the manifestations of the Divine in this realm of what we live or but "blurred images" of the "Real". The Gnostics hold that humans have the potential to turn away from the shadows on the wall permanently and commune with reality directly. This is the basis for an important point: **The created world, including a major portion of the human mind, is seen as evil by the Gnostic primarily because it distracts consciousness away from knowledge of the Divine (man is focused more on this blurred image than the reality of the image).** Physicality inevitably attracts one to the external (psychology calls this "extroversion"), while the turbulence of the personal mind focuses attention on itself. Through this double distraction, the inner self is forgotten. **Yet it is this inner self ("spirit," Greek *pneuma*) that is the point of transcendence within the human field of experience, for it alone has a direct link with ultimate Divinity. Through the experience of transcendence, what Gnostics regard as the true "original sin," namely, alienation and separation of the human from the Divine, can be undone.**

To state that Gnosticism is anticosmic, that Gnostics are world haters, is a gross oversimplification. What the Gnostic struggles against is not so much the cosmos as the alienation of consciousness from the ultimate reality underlying the cosmos, which in monotheistic language is called "God." Since to the soul without gnosis the cosmos appears to be the only reality, it is an obstacle to the Gnostic's true objective, which is the raising of consciousness above all physical and mental substitute realities to the true reality, beyond matter and mind.

The ancient Gnostics lived in a largely monotheistic milieu. The Jews and Christians, and even the pagan Hermeticists, believed in a singular God. Monotheists envision God as the creator and usually also as the sustainer, lawgiver, and law enforcer of the universe. Since the Gnostics-rather reasonably, it seems-could not believe that an erring pair of human ancestors could have brought about the innumerable evils and unpleasanties of the world, they were left with only one culprit.

**Answer for yourself:** Does Judaism believe in "original sin"? No.

Thus the Gnostics reasoned that the Creator, God himself, is the culprit and the originator of this "imperfection" seen within the world and mankind. **The world did not fall, the Gnostics said; rather, it was imperfect from the start.**

The proposition that the world was created by an imperfect deity in its own flawed image makes more sense

when one understands the Gnostic concept of God, which is more subtle than most. The God of the Gnostics is the ultimate reality, beyond and in a sense quite alien to the created universe. Like Kabbalists and most esotericists the world over, Gnostics substitute the idea of the emanation of the Divine in place of the idea of creation. The transcendent God does not create; the divine essence emanates, comes forth, from the unmanifest state into the manifest, making possible further, more specific creation. The original God remains always the first cause, while other entities become the subordinate, or secondary, causes of creation.

To use a homely analogy: A financier or landowner may decide to develop a large piece of land. Most likely this person will not be directly involved in clearing and preparing the land or in planning and constructing the buildings. Architects, engineers, construction workers, and others will do this work. Is it unreasonable to think that the world might have been created in a similar manner? The Gnostics have always held this view. To elaborate on the analogy: If the landowner becomes less and less involved in the development and the chief architect is inept and his workers slovenly, then in spite of the good intentions of the owner, the final results will be anything but perfect.

The architect was known in ancient Gnosticism as the Demiurge- from the Greek *demiurgos*, "half-maker," since he made only the form but not the inner life of the world. The workmen and future managers were called *archons*, using the Greek word for "petty rulers."

**Answer for yourself:** What implication does this idea have that is of such importance to Judaism, Christianity, and the Old Testament? It goes without saying that the majority of the deeds and words of the Old Testament God accord with the character of the Demiurge. Gnosticism's disdain for Yahweh must be ascribed precisely to this circumstance.

## THE HUMAN BEING

Gnosticism holds that human beings are essentially not the product of the material world. The important term in this statement is *essentially*, for Gnosticism focuses on the essence rather than the physical and mental containers that envelop this essence. Though the theory of biological evolution did not exist at the time of the ancient Gnostics, one might guess that unlike their mainstream Christian brethren, they would not have objected to it. For they believed that the human body originates on earth but the human spirit has come from afar, from the realm of the Fullness, where the true Godhead dwells. A human being consists of physical and psychic components, which are perishable, as well as a spiritual component, which is a fragment of the divine essence, sometimes called the divine spark. Because the Gnostic tradition recognizes this dual nature-of the world as well as the human being-it has earned the epithet *dualistic*.

People are generally ignorant of the divine spark residing within them. This ignorance serves the interests of the archons, who act as cosmic slave masters, keeping the light sparks in bondage. In Gnostic belief, Archons were planetary rulers and guardians of the spiritual planes. Gnostic thinking is based upon the notion that the spiritual world is populated by numerous beings (aeons) that have emanated from the original divine being, who is pure and incorruptible. On the other hand, the physical, material world is understood to be ruled by evil forces, and much of this text deals with the origin of the material world and the creation of human beings in particular.

*Eph 6:12 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)*

Anything that causes us to remain attached to earthly things, including the mental concepts we hold, keeps us in enslavement to these lesser cosmic rulers. The majority of men and women are like Adam, who was asleep in



Paradise. Modern esoteric teachers (notably G. Gurdjieff) have capitalized on this Gnostic theme, representing humanity as a throng of sleepwalkers. Awakening from this sleep is the combined result of our desire for liberation and the supernal help extended to us.

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

Gnosticism professes a very distinct and elaborate soteriology- that is, a teaching regarding salvation and saviors. The sleeping human spirit is stirred by the call of the ultimate Divine by way of divine men, or messengers of Light. Such beings have come forth from the True God throughout history. They descend from the highest spiritual realms to call souls back; they come to restore the human spirit to its original consciousness and lead it back to the Divine. Only a few of these salvific figures are mentioned in Gnostic scripture; some of the more important are Seth (the third son of Adam), Jesus, and the prophet Mani. At times a salvific role is attributed to some of the Old Testament prophets, and in the later (Manichaean) Gnostic tradition some founders of other great religions, such as Buddha and Zarathustra, are recognized as true messengers of Light. The majority of Gnostics have always looked to the manifestation of the "Gnostic Christ" among mankind in the presence of ["Jesus the Christ"](#) as the principal savior figure. Even Mani, who carried on his work in Iran and in Asia, regarded himself as a prophet of Jesus Christ and revered Jesus as the savior.

**Answer for yourself:** What does salvation mean to Gnostics? In many ways, the Gnostic concept of salvation is close to the concept of liberation found in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions; Gnostics look to salvation not from sin (original or other), but from the ignorance of which sin is the consequence. Those who know the Divine through gnosis shed all sin, while those without gnosis cannot help but persist in transgressions. **Ignorance-which means ignorance of spiritual realities-is dispelled by gnosis.** The decisive revelation of gnosis was brought by the messengers of Light, especially by awaking to "the Christ" within in the form of Joshua-Jesus, who is recognized as the messenger of this age.

The Gnostic concept of salvation is subtle. Students of spirituality whose grasp of Gnostic ideas is superficial often misunderstand salvation by gnosis as a totally unmediated individual experience, a sort of spiritual do-it-yourself project. This projection onto the Gnostic tradition is largely a product of our secular, religiously alienated age and society. Were salvation possible without any outside aid, the vast majority of the human race would have been liberated long ago. Neither is salvific gnosis the result of mere reading, intellectual speculation, and discourse. To be liberated from the predicament of spiritual ignorance we require help, alongside our own efforts.

## INDIVIDUAL SALVATION

**Gnosticism has always acknowledged that the potential for gnosis, and thus salvation, is inherent in every man and woman, and that salvation is not vicarious and collective but individual. Thus the entire message of mainstream Christian atonement theology is meaningless to the Gnostic. The world was not created perfect, its present state is not the result of a fall, and the human race did not incur an original sin that is passed on to all men and women. Consequently there is no need for God's son to be sacrificed in order to pacify his wrathful Father and thereby save humanity.** Notably, the original Greek word for sin, *hamartia*, means *"missing the mark."* When used in this sense, the word *sinner* describes most people. We all miss the mark, and we do so because we are ignorant of things true and divine. The great messengers of Light come to stimulate our ability to shake off this ignorance. We need the enlightening teachings and liberating mysteries (sacraments) they bring to help us manifest our indwelling potential for liberation.

**Those whom the messengers of Light awaken from their spiritual slumber-and who then put forth the required amount of spiritual effort and diligence-become true Gnostics (knowers, or pneumatics, truly spiritual persons), whereas others remain unconscious of this spiritual truth of mankind and**

**therefore their focus is earthbound (fleshly and not spiritually minded).**

The enemies of the Gnostics (beginning with the heresiologist church fathers) never tired of claiming that the Gnostics were proud elitists who held the rest of humanity in contempt. Yet there are no records of Gnostic crimes against humanity-of the followers of Gnosticism tyrannizing over or persecuting those who were not of their spiritual conviction or who disagreed with them. **The inquisitions, crusades, and jihads were not devised by Gnostics but were frequently devised against them.**

The Gnostic feels that earthly life is in many ways a state of enslavement to the dark powers, yet no Gnostic is known to have believed that death brings about automatic liberation from these onerous conditions. Liberating knowledge must come while a person is still in the embodied state, and those who attain such spiritual liberation enjoy their freedom whether they are in or out of embodiment. On the other hand, those who are not liberated in consciousness are by definition still entrapped in the shackles of manifestation, whether they are in or out of the body. Several Gnostic documents indicate that human beings repeatedly return to this earthly realm (that is, they reincarnate) until their transformed consciousness makes rebirth no longer necessary.

The implications are clear: the Gnostic needs to know the eternal realm from where souls originate. This knowledge makes all issues of life and death self-evident and takes away all fear of what the world calls death. These early Christian Gnostics were in contact with the ineffable, divine reality that is their and our source, they also knew what state they shall return to upon death. Without this knowledge they taught that mankind is indeed dead, even though he may show signs of physical life.

In addition to being accused of spiritual elitism, Gnostics have also time and again been charged with advocating moral nihilism, known technically as *antinomianism*, or "opposition to the law." Here also the subtlety of the Gnostic position is easily missed. Most religions teach that people attain salvation by obeying the rules (for instance, the laws of Manu, of Hammurabi, or of Moses) revealed by a divine or quasi-divine source. This position clearly lacks psychological refinement. People do not act in a vacuum; a person's conduct rises out of his state of consciousness. Murder is the result of a murderous state of mind, lying is the manifestation of a lack of integrity and authenticity in the mind and soul. Buddha, the great Gnostic of Asia, stated that right thinking must be present for right action to occur. Gnosticism is a system of thought based on interior, psychospiritual experience. This being the case, it is not surprising that Gnosticism emphasizes states of mind and regards actions as secondary in nature and importance. Gnostics have always held that consciousness, rather than external action, is the true indicator of moral worth.

If ethics and morals are taken to refer to a system of rules, the Gnostic is not likely to regard them very highly. Rules without the consciousness that reveals the reason behind the rules are little better than useless. **Thus many Gnostics say that rules and laws in themselves are not salvific, for salvation comes only by gnosis. On the other hand, if morality is defined as an inner integrity rising from the illumination stemming from the knowledge of this indwelling supernal Divine spark, it is likely to be enthusiastically embraced by followers of the Gnostic tradition. Thus we see how Paul for instance you teach Gnosticism in the New Testament and still stress morality and ethical conduct which finds its impetus for the awareness of the Christ "within".**

*Rom 6:13 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (KJV)*

Here we find both the ethical and moral admonitions for mankind coupled with this "awakening from ignorance of one's true identity and spiritual position which the Gnostics associated with death" where we see the Spiritual Awakening to the "Christ within" which is the Gnostic's motivation to not only become like "Christ" but to "act like Christ" (remember Christ is the manifestation of the masculine aspect of God and Sophia the feminine aspect of God that dwells within us) as well.



**This is but a brief sketch of core ideas of Gnosticism and as our studies increase this will become more apparent to the reader and student as we examine not only the literature of the earliest Christians but the earliest New Testament of Marcion as well.**

**In closing another important question is whether the elements of the Gnostic worldview are to be understood literally or symbolically.** Literalism and dogmatism, which manifest all too often in the mainstream churches that have declared Gnosticism heretical, are distinctly unGnostic views. Gnosticism has a worldview, but it has no theology and no doctrines to believe in. The Gnostic scriptures are primarily mythical in content, and all myths can be interpreted in diverse ways. Modern depth psychology, especially as taught by Jung, has explored the Gnostic myths primarily because of their relevance to archetypes, individuation, the shadow, and similar concepts. The Gnostic myths, like other myths, can hold a number of meanings that do not cancel each other out but exist simultaneously. Psychological truths, in addition to other kinds of truth, can be found in these myths, and none of these truths needs to be denied.

**The Gnostic worldview holds a perennial appeal because it has always been in accord with the "knowledge of the heart" that is gnosis. Some feel that Gnosticism is especially timely at the beginning of the third millennium. The end of the second millennium saw the radical deterioration of many ideologies that could not stand up to the questions of the times; these questions, however, are addressed by the sages of Gnosticism. The clarity, frankness, authenticity, and frequently the contemporary relevance of Gnostic answers to questions of the human predicament cannot fail to impress and, in time, to convince.**



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# FIRST THINGS FIRST...GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH GNOSTICISM IN THE "FIRST" NEW TESTAMENT

I don't know about you but I am excited in sharing this information with you. The pursuit of this knowledge concerning the origins of the New Testament as developed for me in the greatest detective story ever. As my studies progressed every puzzle piece discovered was an enormous emotional experience for me as I realized that I was getting closer to the truth not only about God but Jesus and "the Christ." Day by day, month by month, and year by year I read and studied voraciously. Finally enough puzzle pieces came together whereby I see what had happened in the pages of the New Testament which I inherited from Rome. Anyone else could look at the picture assembled and see the same things for themselves. It just took much time and a will to persevere through the long hours and years of study to accumulate these facts and organize them in such a way to see what Rome had destroyed and created in their "substitute" Second New Testament. As stated earlier there is a reason why the Jews don't believe in our Christian Jesus and our Christian "Christ." Knowing what they do, which at one time I did not, I no longer wonder why then cannot accept the Christian Jesus. If you study through this and other of our websites with us at Bet Emet you will not as well; but the good news is that you will come to the truth about the Jewish Messiah and "the Christ" for the first time in your life. God is to be praised for your spiritual hunger imparted to you to see Him and His truth. Repentance from idolatry as taught by Christianity today is a great gift.

In Seminary I realized long ago the New Testament was a theological puzzle with many parts from other theological puzzles which were mixed together. Nothing was the same from start to finish. Nothing seemed "pure" and "uncorrupted." Theological confusion was everywhere it seemed the more I learned. Seminary introduced me to these various theologies and it does not take a rocket scientist to spot them on the pages of the New Testament. The picture presented is a mess; theological confusion all over it.

*1 Cor 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion....(KJV)*

If God is not the author of confusion then I had to know who was responsible for this theological nightmare in the New Testament. Once you accumulate this theological knowledge then to the discerning eye there are real problems in the New Testament that makes its reliability for one's faith very troublesome. Now possessing this knowledge the New Testament seemed to me a jumbled mess of conflicting theologies all mixed together like spaghetti. Most people approach the New Testament not possessing such knowledge of the various existing theologies which we find mixed within this New Testament and therefore reads everything as if some sort of a **"literal unity."** They read page after page not ever recognizing that they are reading covenant theology here, dispensational theology there, Egyptian religion here, Mystery religions there, Gnosticism here, anti-Gnosticism there, Western Christianity here, Eastern Christianity there, etc. I tell you it is like spaghetti.

**Answer for yourself:** Can God not do better than this with His Word?



We are conditioned to not notice this not only because we lack the sufficient knowledge but are trained to approach everything with a "literal" interpretation. After all that is what we are: Greeks in a sense. Since childhood we are taught and conditioned since the first grade to take everything "literally." Rome did the same thing when they redacted the "allegorical" First New Testament and this blending of religious concepts became such a hodgepodge and maze that all but with this prior theological knowledge are not able to discern where one theology stops and another begins. It took me time as well to see these things but I was looking to learn as much as I could in Seminary. I did. And my studies did not stop after graduation and they would eventually lead to my resignation from my pastorate. They continue to this very day and will until the day I die.

In order for us to be able to pick up the New Testament and make sense out of the jumbled mess of conflicting theologies we need to understand the tension between the allegorical theology expressed in the first New Testament and the "literal" theology of the Second New Testament.

Let me say it another way. Since the First New Testament given to us by Gnostics like Marcion and Paul then it behooves us to understand thoroughly what Gnosticism actually taught in order to recognize these theological concepts on the pages of our New Testaments. Only by familiarizing ourselves with this knowledge reflected of the message of the First New Testament can we see the deviation from it in Rome's Second New Testament which we possess today. This is of the utmost importance for it challenges to the very core our existing Christian understanding of Jesus, "the Christ," and salvation.

*So...without further ado let us get acquainted with Gnosticism since Marcion the Gnostic and his protege Paul are actually teaching Gnosticism in the First New Testament & not Western Roman Christianity. This will become all the more apparent once we learn what Gnosticism, as a religious philosophy and religious beliefs system, actually taught and compare these beliefs with what actually comprised the First New Testament before it would later be altered and conformed to an anti-Gnostic viewpoint by Rome in their "Second New Testament"*

Now let us continue our studies into what Gnosticism actually entailed as a belief system.



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## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND "THE CHRIST": ORTHODOXY OR HERESY?

- **Answer for yourself:** Is it possible that today's Christian believes doctrines about "the Christ" that are totally foreign and contrary to what the earliest Christians first believed about the Christ?
- **Answer for yourself:** Is it possible that today's Christian believes doctrines about "Jesus" that are totally foreign and contrary to what the earliest Jewish followers believed about Jesus?
- **Answer for yourself:** Is it possible that today's Christian believes and has commingled together doctrines about "the Christ" and Jesus" in such a way that they have totally lost the earliest Christian's understanding of Jesus Christ?
- **Answer for yourself:** Is it possible that the the Ancients and their earliest understanding of God and His "Christ," once understood in allegorical terms, has been completely reinterpreted "literally" in our New Testament; thereby losing the earliest understanding of God's Christ as held by the earliest Christians before the emergence of the Roman Church?
- **Answer for yourself:** Is this misunderstanding of "the Christ" and "Jesus" proposed above due to the refutation of the earliest Christians' understanding of "the Christ" by Rome as espoused in their nullification of the First New Testament by their Second New Testament?

**WOW!** These questions are staggering and the answers to them are earthshaking. There is a lot of truth to understand and recover if we are ever to get truthful answers for the above questions.

## DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?

People often say they want "truth" but the real test is what they do when they find it. The test begins now. Many people have distorted Christianity to such an extent that it has led them to act in direct contradiction to its fundamental principles. We can read about this in past eras and see it happening now. Christians have argued about the propositions of their religion, in complete disagreement with each other - every person, every group tending to think they are right and everyone else wrong. And this has happened from the very beginning. Yet the fact remains; Christianity has continued, despite all distortions and divisions, as a recognizable world religion.

Let us never forget that Christianity and Judaism are intrinsically related to, and rooted in, a particular area of the world and a particular time of history; in Christian teaching, Christ came to a specific place within a dated period. Of importance to us and this website is the determination of what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" before such religious concepts and dogmas were altered by Rome in the succeeding centuries and recorded in their refutation of the earliest Christian beliefs in their "Second New Testament."

**Answer for yourself:** But what was this "Christ" as first understood by the people that first wrote of "him" back then? Are our concepts and beliefs about "the Christ" akin to what the earliest Christians first believed or have they been changed and we not know it? Can the earliest Christian beliefs about "the Christ" be traced by to antiquity in the earliest writings known to mankind today as found in Egypt? Were these Ancient concepts of



"the Christ" later altered and changed by Rome and are these changes concerning "the Christ" reflected in our New Testaments and do they go unnoticed by almost all who lack such knowledge and a discriminating eye on the texts?

*These are possibly some of the most important questions that you could ever ask and the truthful answers to such questions are unsettling to say the least.*

The Jews of the Old Testament were a people whose history is recorded and known to us. Their records show that they felt a duty had been laid on them by God. This duty was to make known to surrounding nations that the Creator and Supreme Power was One and was Spirit. The Jews knew that they had a historic mission. Later, the Christians used the Old Testament to show that Jewish prophetic writing and Jewish histories, real or allegorized, were pre-figuring the coming of Christ. What is surprising when one looks is that the earliest understanding of "the Christ" as held by the earliest Jewish Christians and later Gnostic Christians will be completely changed by Rome in the second through the fifth century!

The existence of an institutional Church is closely connected with the historical side of Christianity. When it is taken as central to Christian belief that divine intervention came at a specific moment in earthly time and that human history had been leading up to this moment, it would make little sense for Divine connection with human history to end at this point. Such a conception of Christianity necessitates a religion involved with the history of our world: therefore, integral to it would be the formation of an organized teaching Church complete with religious documents, one of whose functions would be to continue to the end of time. For this era, for this region of the world, an organized institutional Church, with a recognized body of scripture and dogma, was found necessary, if Christianity were to survive as a religious vehicle for mankind. Some form of "orthodoxy" was essential in light of Judaism which already possessed a written Divine Revelation of its own which was seen as "authoritative" for its religious dogmas and teachings.

**Answer for yourself:** Was this "orthodoxy" as created by today's Roman Christianity part of a Divine plan or could it be due to the accidental development of various men's words and actions who refused the prior understanding of "the Christ" as handed down since the beginning of time as the archeological records indicate?

**Answer for yourself:** Is today's "orthodoxy" really the "unorthodoxy" of two thousand years ago which won the theological and literary wars due to the mighty power of the Holy Roman Empire?

All that we can discover for certain, in looking back on what has been recorded, is that there came to exist in Palestine a collection of sayings and precepts, ascribed to an unknown teacher, together with an assembly of stories about him. The problem that besets us is how to interpret these records handed down to us. We are challenged by the understanding that the accepted "orthodoxy" at one time was an allegorical understanding of "the Christ." This was the religious beliefs of those who fashioned and wrote of "this Christ" in the beginning. Later we find, as this website will prove, that a "literalization" of "the Christ" will occur and attributed to a "Jesus" which we find in the New Testament. Absent is any explicit and uncontested reference to this "Jesus" outside the New Testament which Rome will give us that refutes the prior understanding of the "allegorists" and their understanding of "the Christ." Understand that the First New Testament was collected and put together by those who understood "the Christ" not a literal human but only as an "allegory" expressing Divine Concepts from antiquity. That means Marcion who advocated Paul, himself also a Gnostic, were original writers of this "allegorical Christ" which were later made to be "literal" by the Holy Roman forgery mill.

With no general theory or system having been given, in a relatively short time a set of doctrines and rules of behavior had been formed, which were understandable to a wide variety of nations and classes of people and which spread rapidly over the then known world. Even by the beginning of the second century the

"mainstream" body of Christian doctrine was forming and the "Great Church" was recognized - to be either followed or attacked. **This "Great Church" will respond to these "allegorists" and their First New Testament with a strong refutation of the "allegorical Christ" with a Second New Testament of their own making and editing.**

## WHO ARE THE REAL "HERETICS"?

Every system of religion, philosophy, science or politics has its "heretics." There will always be those who, in their own opinion, are reformers of a religious system or are seeking, in their own opinion, a truer interpretation of it, but who are considered by the upholders of the existing religious belief system to be deviationists and distorters of what is right and true. Today, to be called a heretic is, in itself, considered something of a compliment - the description of an adventurous, independent thinker. But in the early centuries of Christianity, the term "heretic" was one of grave abuse, and those termed "heretics" would usually deny the appellation and would maintain that they and not their opponents were keeping the traditional line.

**Answer for yourself:** Who has the truer interpretation of "the Christ;" the earliest Christians who were the "allegorists" that wrote and collected the First New Testament or the "literalists" that refuted it and altered it and replaced it with their "literalistic" epistles; called the Second New Testament for clarification?

**Answer for yourself:** How do we know that there were different "New Testaments"? That is easy. Just take a look at the evidence. Before the interested student lies not only the archeological evidences of the various manuscripts and their multiple additions, deletions, and alterations but the abundant evidence that exists from the discoveries of Nag Hammadi and the Gnostic Gospels. This type of "allegorist" and "Gnostic" literature was almost made extinct by Rome and their incessant purge of such religious doctrines during the early centuries. Libraries were burned along with those not accepting the Roman re-transformation of "the Christ. In such a way over time "orthodoxy" became "unorthodoxy" by the hands of Rome.

There can be no "heresy" without "orthodoxy," so in looking at these early centuries, as it is necessary to discover what "orthodoxy" means and how certain teachings came to be included within it. Development of the original revelation was bound to take place; out of what was given, deductions would be made. As this development progressed some ideas came to be accepted, others rejected; some beliefs came to be regarded as true, others branded as "heresies." All depends on who was calling the other "heretics."

The original meaning of the word "heresy" was neither abusive nor complementary. The word came from the Greek, "haerens," meaning "an act of choosing," then, "the course of action," or "choice" - leading to "the choice of philosophical principles" and to "those who professed them," i.e. "a school or sect." Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, used the term to mean a party or sect, without disparagement. Even St. Paul, in Acts 26:5 used it in this sense: "that, after the most stratest sect, or heresy, of our region, I lived a Pharisee."

But in the New Testament epistles the term is used in a condemnatory sense. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, said in I Cor. 11:18-19:

***1 Cor 11:18-19 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (KJV)***

We find the same idea in the epistle of Titus in 3:10:

***Titus 3:10 10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; (KJV)***

Such deviations arose even as the first Christian groups were being formed. In Paul's writings they are condemned because Paul felt that they could change the whole meaning of the coming of "Christ."



**Answer for yourself:** What did Paul mean?

**Answer for yourself:** What changes could Paul possibly be referring to concerning the alteration of the then present understanding of "the Christ" which he taught?

**Answer for yourself:** Was Paul's "Christ" a human or was he a "Cosmic Godman" and are conditioned to read into his writings a "literal" man when the concept first espoused by him and Marcion was exactly the opposite?

But in the days immediately after Apostolic times, differing interpretations of the Christian revelation were not necessarily thought of as heresy. **Doctrines were only in the process of formation.**

Among the Church Fathers, Bishop Ignatius in the first century was the first to use the term "heretic." He used it against those who seemed **to him** to be confusing the true understanding of "the Christ".

**Answer for yourself:** Did Ignatius hold the same ideas concerning "Christ" as had Paul previously? You probably will say "yes" but the reality we find upon much study is that he did not! You will come to see this as we progress through this website.

Then, as doctrinal formulation began to have increasing importance, **the word "heresy" came to mean "any departure from the accepted and recognized creed."**

**Answer for yourself:** Who determines "the creed"? Well of course you know Rome did and they are "literalists" and not "allegorists" as were the earliest Christians.

It was not until the great controversies of the fourth century that the derogatory meaning of the word "heresy" became finally fixed - namely, as a "doctrine maintained within the Church, but disruptive of its unity." A "schism" was an ecclesiastical cleavage, but a "heresy" was a spiritual aberration. By this time, many doctrines and dogmas had been formulated and had become the teaching of the Great Church - binding beliefs for those who belonged to it.

By the fourth century, the word "heresy" had come to be used according to the present **Oxford English Dictionary** definition: **"Theological opinion or doctrine held in opposition to the 'Catholic' or orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church"**. Let us not forget that this reference is toward the Roman Catholic Church of Rome. It not included the yet stronger derogatory meaning of "fundamental error, adhered to with obstinacy, after it (error) has been defined and declared by the Church in an authoritative manner." The use of "heresy" in this sense made it necessary for an "orthodox" doctrine to have been defined.

Up to the second century the word "catholic" meant "worldwide." By the end of that century it already meant holding to doctrines of Apostolic tradition as accepted by the universal federation of churches, which recognized one another. **Rome, which claimed Peter and Paul as its founders, had long been accepted as the most important among this confederation of churches, and therefore the leader of these. By the end of the fifth century Pope Leo I had united in idea the Primacy of the Apostolic See with the Mission of the Roman Empire, (the Holy Roman Empire that was to be). The Great Church, with its center in Rome, was now recognized as the Universal, or Catholic, Church; and what the Bishop of Rome declared to be "orthodox" as "orthodoxy." Creed and Canon had been finally established. By the end of the 5th century its basic ideas had been formed.**

**At the same time we find the constant revision of the New Testament in line with each successive "Catholic Church Council" as religious dogmas were constantly being refined and elucidated. The early heresies were primarily concerned with doctrine. In the early centuries it was often due to the very heresies themselves that doctrines were formulated and re-formulated. Formulations were made in order to counteract or refute the heresy and this, in turn, led to further need of clarification. So the body of dogma requiring Christian assent continued to grow.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is it possible when equipped with the necessary historical information, archeological information, manuscript evidences with comparisons of existing Greek New Testament texts when examined for changes, additions, and deletions, to see the "theological" wars waged between these "allegorists" and "literalists" concerning "the Christ" as found in our existing New Testaments today? It sure is! Let me give you a hint: Rome will win and so will the "literalists."

The early heresies are important, not only because of their content, but because of their influence on later doctrine developments as hinted at and mentioned above.

The formation of "orthodox" Christianity is clearly not a straightforward story. Some teachings entered the established creed and so formed the mainstream of Christianity; others became known as "heresies" and created separate churches and sects, or else died out, either peacefully or violently by Roman suppression.

The causes of this selection of doctrines that were to be considered "orthodoxy" are many and the consequences manifold. Some see such a selection as part of a "Divine plan," others as "accidental." **What confronts us is the need to find answers concerning the deviation from the original understanding of "the Christ" as first held by the Apostles, Paul, and Marcion who saw the need for the First New Testament which expressed these original ideas and dogmas of "the Christ," especially in light of Rome's later refutation of this Gnostic idea of "the Christ" in their Second New Testament (the one current today).**

**Answer for yourself:** It recovering the original understanding of "the Christ" possible? Yes it is but it requires a significant amount of study of the Ancient's understanding of God, His Christ, the doctrines reflected concerning "the Christ" in the First New Testament and the later Roman refutation of Marcion and the Ancient's understanding of "the Christ." This refutation of the earliest understanding of "the Christ" will occur over five centuries and its complete success will be aided not only by the power of the Roman State but by multiple forgeries of epistles and gospels whereby a "literal" presentation of "the Christ" will replace the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" as held by the earliest Christians.

Let me close with a word of caution. Don't let us get confused by misunderstanding the word "Christ" in relation to the Hebrew word "Messiah." Certainly the human messiah was to be anointed (Christ) for a work for God. Israel taught that only "Prophets, Priests, and Kings" were anointed. Again the human "messiah" was to be from the lineage of David thus he was destined to be King of Israel. Again the human "messiah" was to function in a Prophetic or proclamative role by teaching and preaching God's word and calling for repentance. And lastly certainly the human messiah through such preaching of repentance was to draw men toward God; thus fulfilling the role of a Priest which is the link between man and God (brining men unto God." But all this does not make the human messiah "the Christ" in a literal sense; especially in light of the knowledge that those who first fashioned "the Christ" concept never visualized it in such literal terms. We need more study to understand the Ancient's understanding of "the Christ" to see this and its correct relationship to "the Jewish human messiah."

All of this will become more evident and clear as a bell as we examine the various documents collected by Marcion in the First New Testament and see them as they existed "theologically" in the beginning before Rome would "add" to them and try to "literalize" the "Christ" concept. Coupled with this will be the examination of later anti-Gnostic theology which will be later added to Paul's writings along with the Gospels whereby there is a purposeful attempt by Rome to "literalize" the earlier understanding of the "allegorical" Christ. It is truly amazing at what you will see when the "light comes on" as you see possibly for the first time in your life that much of what you have been taught about "the Christ" and "Jesus" is utterly baseless.

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# THE RELIGIOUS CLIMATE OF THE ANCIENTS AND THE PREVALENCE OF GNOSTICISM

Early in the second century letters from venerated leaders and documents, often termed "Memoirs of the Apostles", were being circulated. Using these records teachers began to gather groups of pupils around them. They taught these groups in their lodgings, as Paul had done, or in the house of one of their followers. Classes were often held daily, usually in the early morning.

The original meaning of the Christian *ecclesia* (later to be translated as "church") was "assembly", deriving from the Athenian *ecclesia* meaning "the assembly of citizens". But the Christian *ecclesia*, in its first days, was, as Paul termed it, the "assembly of saints" because, once baptized, a Christian renounced the pagan life - not in theory, but in practice. This meant a truly heroic life, not only in the renunciation of all worldly pleasures, but in accepting possible martyrdom. For in the early centuries, before Constantine made Christianity a recognized religion of the Roman Empire, there were intermittent persecutions of Christians, some of horrifying brutality.

Two classes of students attended the groups: "inquirers", who had not yet made up their minds to be baptized; and "hearers", who had been accepted and who were undergoing preparation before baptism. This usually took three years and meant rigorous fasting, vigils and training in prayer. Those under training were the "catechumens". Even among them not a few hesitated before committing themselves to the heroic life, and remained catechumens for many years. As long as they were catechumens, although they could partake in the Christian worship, they were not admitted to the final part of it, which led to and included the Holy Eucharist, the sacred meal.

The teachers of the new ideas continued to exert great influence. Catechumens and penitents gathered round them. The atmosphere at the time was probably similar to that of our own day. There was a general and pervading sense of disillusion and of breakdown, so that many groups of people were searching for a meaning in their crumbling world and for deliverance from the troubles that they saw on all sides. Ideas and systems of religion and philosophy were coming from the East and from Greece and from Egypt, and meeting in this active Middle Eastern centre. It was a religious melting pot of sorts. It must have been difficult then, as it is certainly difficult now, to discriminate, and to discover which teachings had true value amid the influx of pseudo-wisdom, exaggeration and distortion. It was in this climate that Christianity was spreading. Not only were local churches being founded on the pattern set by St Paul, but different schools, following different teachers, were growing up amongst them, as had already happened at Corinth in Paul's time.

Among the teachers in these rapidly multiplying schools were those later called "**Gnostics**" by the Church Fathers of the second and third centuries. What these Church Fathers of the second and third centuries termed "Gnosticism" was considered by them to be one of the most dangerous of the "heresies" which the "orthodox" Church had to face.

It is difficult, with the data that we have, to know exactly what these gnostic teachings were. Until fairly

recently our knowledge of them came almost entirely from accounts and descriptions given by the Church Fathers, who were attacking them and often portrayed them with more hatred than fairness. Consequently, though the accounts of these systems and beliefs sometimes seem to have been given with understanding, and are full and detailed, ridicule and hostility often enter in, so that there must be an element of doubt in their content. Most of the original Gnostic writings were purposely destroyed by the Church Fathers.

In 1945, at Nag Hammadi in the Nile Valley, a jar was discovered in a cave. This jar contained a whole library of Gnostic books, many from as early as the second century. They are Coptic translations from the original Greek or from Greek copies of the original, and appear to have been collected together in the years around 400 AD and buried for safekeeping. They show that the refutations written by the "literalists" Church Fathers in the second and third centuries - the source of almost all that had previously been known about the Gnostics - included remarkably accurate and comprehensive accounts of Gnostic teachings.

The Nag Hammadi texts had been translated one by one into Coptic. The translator appears not always to have understood what he was translating. Unlike the Bible, where there are numerous texts to compare with each other, here there is only the one. So it is difficult for scholars to know what mistakes or alterations have been made.

Whatever truth there is in any religious system, it inevitably appears later in popularized and therefore distorted forms. Many of the Gnostic writings that are extant seem to show ideas that have degenerated. The documents found in the nineteenth century, such as the *Pistis Sophia*, date from the period of decadence, when the original ideas had become embedded in fantastic elaborations, difficult to disentangle. But, in the Nag Hammadi collection, there are certain writings of great depth, which bear the stamp of authenticity.

And yet there is a further difficulty. Many Gnostic ideas were purposely made obscure and hidden to keep them secret, so that much of what we read may not be understandable without some key.

There are dangers also inherent in the use of myth and allegorical forms. The second century Gnostics made great use of myth and personification of attributes and qualities. These can all too easily be taken literally and, even for those who originally understood them, the balance is difficult to keep.

All the great religions have their myths, as this may be the only way to describe what is beyond the confines of logical mind; but their use by a philosopher or teacher to explain a system often led to superstition and nonsense. "Only the highest type of mind, to which Plato belongs, can hold together the rational and imaginative in an organic way. At a lower level the pendulum swings" (C.H. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel).

Having read what is known about these systems there remain still greater problems. There were many different Gnostic sects in the early Christian centuries; basically they held the same main tenets, though some might be connected with Christianity and some definitely were not.

**Answer for yourself:** But how much were their ideas based on more ancient religions or on contemporary religions coming from the East?

**Answer for yourself:** How much were they part of a general system affecting all religions?

**Answer for yourself:** Is what we know of them, even in their seemingly most profound form, a distortion of an older teaching which may have appeared in various forms in other times and in other places?

"Gnosticism" in its widest sense means the belief in salvation by knowledge - that is, by comprehension of the nature of the true reality that confronts mankind. This, to the Gnostics, was comprehension of the soul's origin, its predicament in this world and the way out of the predicament.



Such knowledge, they held, cannot be merely intellectual but must be experiential. It is primarily knowledge of the self - its true nature and its destiny. To explain this destiny various cosmogonies and cosmic systems were given, but always the aspiring soul had to travel upwards to its goal.

In many parts of the world - in Egypt, in Greece, in Babylon - we have accounts of mystery religions, which involve secret rites of initiation into various stages through which the believer must pass, often corresponding, on the cosmological scale to ascension of one's soul through worlds or spheres in the universe.

In the forms in which these "mystery cults" and "mystery religions" have come down to us, it appears that the reciting of certain secret formulae (utterance of "the Word") and the performance of ritual actions were supposed to ensure the soul's ascending passage. They almost certainly came to be understood in that way:

- The Eleusinian Mysteries, teachings said to come from Pythagoras,
- Ancient religious systems from Persia and Babylon,
- accounts of the ancient Jewish sect of the Essenes
- The Ophites in Phrygia,

all give hints and traces of the same understanding of the soul and Gnosticism.

This makes it seem possible that there were ideas in all of them that were of a different order from those of magic and superstition. In the writings of the second-century Gnostics, which the Church Fathers have recorded and which were discovered at Nag Hammadi, there occasionally seem to be connections of this same kind - connections also with the philosophy of Plato and with the Hermetic literature that came from Egypt. It would appear that the earliest Monotheists of Egypt possessed this spiritual knowledge from the very beginning from their earliest Divine Revelations from God and bequeathed it to the rest of mankind.

"Nowhere do we find a pure form of Gnosticism; always it is built on earlier, pre-existing religions or their traditions" (H.T.W. Drivers, The Origins of Gnosticism). This explains the importance of one's correct understanding of Egyptian religion and mankind's earliest understanding of God on this planet! This may mean that the gnostic tendency apparent in the second and third centuries was a syncretic movement - the prevailing sense of instability at that time and in that part of the world leading seekers after certainty and absolute "truth" to select from all the religions that they could find anything which seemed appropriate to their own belief. There was and is a thread of "truth" that runs through all world religions before the "exclusivity" man's selfishness tarnishes them. One could say that the Theosophists have done the same in our own time. The Gnostics themselves held that revealed truth was witnessed in many religions; and that people who knew the truth would know the same truth. Certainly, the Nag Hammadi collection brought together various religious writings, not only of Christian and Jewish orientations, but also those seemingly based on Neo-Platonism and even Zoroastrianism.

**Answer for yourself:** The age old Christian questions confronts us: If you were a pygmy how would ever find the "saving" truth in Borneo in, let's say, the 10th century C.E.? Thank goodness I was born in Christian America and not in Borneo. Right? God sure must love me and have a great dislike for small people.

## **A QUICK GLIMPSE AT THE GNOSTIC ESSENES OF ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT & QUMRAN**

Judaism, with its emphasis on history and obedience to the Law, would not seem to be a likely source for gnostic ideas; and yet there were sects within Judaism which may have had some connection with Gnostic ideas. This only reveals the variety that develops within the Gnostic system as different "adherents" try to achieve the ultimate goal of self-awareness and oneness with God through various methods. The Gnostic Essenes - "the Pious Ones" - appear in the histories of Pliny the elder, of Josephus, the Jewish historian, and of

**Philo the Alexandrian - all of the first century. The sect was certainly in existence in the second century BC, at the time of the Maccabees, but its origin could have been much earlier. In these first-century accounts, Essene speculations on the nature of God appear to diverge widely from orthodox Judaism.** On another of Bet Emet's websites I demonstrate beyond any doubt the apostasy of the Essenes from normative conservative Biblical Judaism where they lapse into idolatry. Speaking on the Essenes Philo states: "They were given to enquiry into the being of God and the creation of the Universe."

They studied the scriptures to discover their inner meaning, and used allegorical interpretations to explain them. God was the author of good alone, and the body mortal and transitory; the soul was immortal and of subtlest ether, lured by nature into the prison of the body. At death it was released and the divine spirit in man could then ascend through the spheres to its goal. **There are hints here of what will be found later in the Gnostic teachings of the second century, but the Essene tenets were kept hidden and their rules of secrecy were extremely strict.** That much we know from Josephus; but, though he lived in an Essene community for a short while, he was unlikely to have been sufficiently initiated to learn much about their secret doctrines. He tells of their strict organization, their benevolence towards each other and to those around them and the asceticism of their life. He describes the grades in their society, their three-year novitiate before they could be accepted, the simplicity of their living and their goodness. But we cannot be certain that any of their writings are extant.

Pliny writes about a perennial colony of Essenes on the west shore of the Dead Sea. It is possible that the so-called "Dead Sea Scrolls", discovered at Qumran in 1947 (and, many think, dating from before 70 AD) belonged to an Essene sect. The community who lived at Qumran at the beginning of the Christian era may have been Essenes or closely related to them. But these documents do not prove this, though rules of discipline are given and also descriptions of their rituals and forms of organization. What can be discovered of their basic beliefs mainly concerns a struggle between light and darkness, good and evil, summed up in the battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, and between the two spirits governing man. "God made for man two spirits, that he (man) might walk in them till the appointed time of the visitation." These were the spirits of Truth and of Perversion.

There are detailed descriptions of the battles waged between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, but in the absence of any further explanations or earlier writings, **it is impossible to know how much has allegorical meaning, how much is meant to be historical.** We do not know who the "Teacher of Righteousness" is, nor who the "Wicked Priest", nor whether they existed historically at all. **The Qumran documents may be related to Essene doctrines or they may have no real connection.**

We can only know that, just before the birth of Christianity and during its early years, there were groups of people leading exclusive, ascetic lives, dedicated to spiritual achievement, and that they are likely to have had some influence on religious thinkers of the time. **It has been said that the writers of the Gospels could once have been Essenes themselves** - for Pharisees and Sadducees, the two other important Jewish sects, are mentioned continually in the Gospels and the Essenes, never. **But there is nothing recorded to substantiate this possibility other than a scrutiny of the religious tenants expressed in the New Testament and their close affinity to Essenic religious beliefs.**

Alexandria, in the last centuries B C, had become a centre of Hellenism and of trade with the East. It was also the largest Jewish city in the world - a meeting-place for ideas of all kinds. The Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, Philo, writing shortly after the birth of Christ, was the foremost representative of Hellenistic Judaism. His most important work was his Allegorical Commentary on the Old Testament. Philo was deeply influenced by Plato, particularly in his doctrine of God and creation.

**Now we need to pay attention!**

**In Philo's exposition, God is indefinable, with no qualities that cannot be perceived by man. He is perfect Spirit and cannot have contact with carnal substance. Through the mediation of Divine Ideas,**



or Forces, united into one Supreme force - the Logos - the orderly world came into being out of shapeless, lifeless matter. The Logos was the creative "Word of God" in Genesis - the vice-regent of God.

Man's soul is a power of God, attracted into the sensual prison of the body. It can only attain freedom by resisting the allurements of the senses. Even in this life, man can acquire such virtue as to attain the Divine Vision, when the Spirit of God will dwell in him and "stir him like the strings of a musical instrument". For the wicked, this life is the real Hell. At death those who have lived free from attachment can return to their original condition with God. All others must, at death, pass into another body.

**Answer for yourself:** Where did Philo get these ideas? Many of these ideas will be met again in the teachings of the Gnostics because he got his ideas from the Gnostic Egyptians and it is possible that followers of Philo had formed sects and groups at the beginning of the Christian era. Their influence may have penetrated many circles.

## IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE EGYPTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE METAPHYSICAL GOD....GNOSTICISM WAS BORN

In the centuries just before and just after the start of the Christian era, a body of literature was current in Egypt - the Corpus Hermetica. These tracts were written in the form of revelations from Hermes Trismegistus, ancient sage of Egypt, deified as Hermes, God of Wisdom, and, possibly, synonymous with the Egyptian God, Thoth (the neteroo). The oldest extant text is the Poimandres, and there also exist other texts, mainly in Greek, that were circulating in the second and third centuries AD in Egypt. All have the same outlook and religious basis, and many ideas in Hermetic literature are similar to some Gnostic themes.

Egypt was the first monotheistic religion in spite of its many representations of the various attributes of God seen today in the forms of "gods"! In the Hermetica there is one God who is good and demands no service but virtue. Salvation can only be through knowledge-but this is knowledge of God, not about Him. To know Him [God] is to be like Him.

Hermetic and Egyptian explanations of creation and of the position of the human soul in creation are found in many forms of Gnosticism. Primal Being (Mind, Light) created the universe, including seven planets, called "Governors", who ruled the material world under the laws of destiny. Primal Mind also created Archetypal Man in His own image; Archetypal Man descended through the spheres and begot out of Nature, human-kind.

In the *Poimandres*, it is explained how the human soul can be saved from enslavement to the planets and can ascend through the seven spheres to heaven, whence came Archetypal Man. Knowledge is the key to unlock the gates and pass the Guardians. This is not common knowledge by a "mystery" available to only the "elect."

- "I, myself, Mind, dwell with the Holy and Good... I, myself, Mind, will not permit the assailing activities of the body to take effect. I am the guardian of the gates. But I am far removed from foolish, evil .... and godless men." (*Poimandres* Treatise i).
- "Ignorance of God is the greatest evil among men." (Treatise vii).

Hermetic literature was not Christian in its form or terminology, but it had great influence on all the mystic and gnostic schools that were connected with early Christianity.

There was a sect, apparently in existence in Phrygia before Paul journeyed there, known as the Ophites, taking

their name from the serpent, which symbolized the rational aspect of the life principle. Their ideas had many similarities with those of the Hermetica. Like we saw with Gnosticism what is known about them comes almost entirely from attacks on them by the Church Fathers, Irenaeus and Hippolytus, in the second and third centuries. The Ophites had by then incorporated Christian terminology into their teaching and were treated by their attackers as heretics. As with other Gnostic sects it is difficult to know how much they were influenced by Christianity itself, and difficult to discover what is allegory and what is superstition in their system. Irenaeus and Hippolytus treated them as heretical Christian sects, as they did many other Gnostic groups.

The various sects enumerated by the Church Fathers differ from one another, but their ideas clearly have many important features in common. And it is these important features that must be considered in their relation to "heresy" and "orthodoxy". The fact that there were ideas common to all Gnostic sects, which had affinity with those of other religious and philosophical systems, both ancient and contemporary, was either ignored or condemned by those who attacked Gnosticism. Their anxiety to protect the Christian tradition, as they understood it, from any danger of disruption, forced them to disregard a powerful current of thought and belief, which might or might not have led Christian doctrine to develop in a slightly different direction from the one it actually took.





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## GNOSTICISM: WHAT DID GNOSTICS BELIEVE?

It is important that we continually remember that Marcion, a Gnostic, saw the need for the collection of the First New Testament that espoused Gnostic beliefs. It is also important to know that this First New Testament will be later edited, amended, and altered and changed by Rome through textual manipulation through Rome's forgery mill. The result of such dishonesty and deception is a blurred image of the truth concerning what the earliest followers of Jesus and "the Christ" truly believed about God in their day.

The Gnostic movement and its literature were essentially wiped out by the end of the 5th century CE by heresy hunters from mainline Christianity. Gnosticism consisted of many syncretistic belief systems which combined elements taken from Egyptian, Asian, Babylonian, Greek and Syrian religions, from astrology, and from Judaism and Christianity. They constituted one main branches of early Christianity. By the second century CE, many very different Christian-Gnostic sects had formed within the Roman Empire at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Some Gnostics worked within Jewish Christian and mainline Christian groups, and greatly influenced their beliefs from within. As mainline Christianity grew in strength and organization, Gnostic sects came under increasing pressure and persecution. They almost disappeared by the 6th century. Archeology has helped us restore this truth and understanding of the earliest believers in Jesus as "the Christ." Contrary to what Rome would have us believe about a "literal" Christ the earliest believes saw the "Christ" in allegorical fashion.

Knowledge about Gnosticism has been inferred mainly from extensive attacks that were made on Gnosticism by Christian heresiologists (writers against heresy) of the second and early third century. These included:

- Irenaeus (130? - 200? CE),
- Clement of Alexandria (145? - 213?),
- Tertullian (160? - 225?) and
- Hippolytus (170? - 236).

In our study we have to be very careful because these heresy hunters were not particularly accurate or objective in their analysis of Gnosticism .

Some Gnostic texts were non-Christian; others were originally non-Christian but had Christian elements added; others were entirely Christian documents. We are thankful to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts for restoring this true picture of the Gnostic Christ. The Nag Hammadi find revealed that there was a broad range of beliefs among the various independent Gnostic systems or schools. The However, the following points are believed to be generally accurate throughout the movement.

## A SUMMARY OF GNOSTIC BELIEFS

Gnostics believed that they alone truly understood "the Christ's message, and that other streams of through within Christianity had misinterpreted "the Christ's" and "Jesus'" mission and sayings.

To Gnostics knowledge was not an intellectual exercise; it was not a passive understanding of some aspect of spirituality. Rather, knowledge had a redeeming and liberating function that helped the individual break free of bondage to the world.

*Rom 10:2 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 12:8 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (KJV)*

*Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)*

Gnostics believed that the Supreme Father God or Supreme God of Truth is remote from human affairs; He is unknowable and undetectable by human senses. She/he created a series of supernatural but finite beings called Aeons that bridge the gap between matter and spirit; between man and the Supreme Father God. One of these was Sophia, a virgin, who in turn gave birth to an defective, inferior Creator-God, also known as the Demiurge. Demiurge means "public craftsman" in Greek. This lower God created the earth and its life forms. This is the God of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), a deity who was viewed as fundamentally evil, jealous, rigid, lacking in compassion and prone to genocide. The Demiurge "thinks that He is supreme. His pride and incompetence have resulted in the sorry state of the world as we know it, and in the blind and ignorant condition of most of mankind."

Gnostics believed in a strong duality of spirit and body. Spirit is of divine origin and good; the body is inherently earthly and evil. Gnostics were hostile to the physical world, to matter and the human body. But they believed that trapped within some people's bodies were the sparks of divinity or seeds of light that were supplied to humanity by Sophia.

*Gal 5:17 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (KJV)*

*Rom 7:24-25 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (KJV)*

Gnostics believed in a salvation of a dying and rising god; not literally but only allegorically. A person attains salvation by learning secret knowledge of their spiritual essence: that they are a divine spark of light or spirit of God trapped in a fleshly body. In allegorical terms their soul was asleep and they were unaware of their true spiritual essence. To Gnostics this was understood as a person's resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life. They had been raised from the "dead" while yet alive.

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

They then have the opportunity to escape from the prison of their bodies at death. Their soul can ascend to be reunited with the Supreme God at the time of their death. Gnostics divided humanity into three groups:

- the spiritual, who would be saved irrespective of their behavior while on earth
- the Soulsh, who could be saved if they followed the Gnostic path
- the carnal who are hopelessly lost

Gnostics had a unique understanding of "evil." They did not look upon the world as having been created perfectly and then having degenerated as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Rather the world was seen as



being evil at the time of its origin, having been created by an inferior God.

Some Gnostic sects honored the snake. They did not view the snake as a seducer who led the first couple into sinful behavior. Rather, they saw him as a liberator who brought knowledge to Adam and Eve by convincing them to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and thus to become fully human.

Gnosticism adopted the ancient's beliefs in "the Christ." The role of the redeemer in Gnostic belief is heavily debated at this time. Gnostics seem to have looked upon Christ as a revealer or liberator, rather than a savior or judge. His purpose was to spread knowledge which would free individuals from the Demiurge's control and allow them to return to their spiritual home with the Supreme God at death. Some Gnostic groups promoted **Docetism**, the belief that Christ was pure spirit and only had a phantom body; Jesus just appeared to be human to his followers. They reasoned that a true emissary from the Supreme God could not have been overcome by the evil of the world, and to have suffered and died. These beliefs were considered heresy by mainline Christians. Some Gnostics believed that Christ's resurrection occurred at or before Jesus' death on the cross. They defined his resurrection as occurring when his spirit was liberated from his body. Many Gnostics believed that Jesus had both male and female disciples.

**The Universe:** This is divided into three kingdoms: The "Earthly Cosmos": The earth is the center of the universe, and is composed of the world that we know of and an underworld. It is surrounded by air and by 7 concentric heavenly spheres: one for each of the Moon, Venus, Mercury, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. (Although the planet Uranus is visible to the naked eye, it was not recognized as a planet in ancient times.) Beyond Saturn resides Leviathan, a snake coiled in a single circle, devouring its own tail. Within these spheres live demonic, tyrannical entities called Archons. Beyond them lies Paradise which contains the "Tree of Life", the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil", and the flaming, turning sword of Genesis 3:24. Beyond Paradise was the sphere of the fixed stars, divided into the 12 signs of the zodiac.

The "Intermediate Kingdom is composed of an inner blue circle of darkness and an outer yellow ring of light. Within these rings is a sphere which is the realm of Sophia. The "Kingdom of God" consists of two spheres: an outer one of the unknowable Supreme God, and inner ring of the Son.

## CONCLUSION

It is up to us now to begin to look at Marcion and his collection of writings that composed the First New Testament and see clearly what constituted Marcion's Gnostic New Testament, the writings included and excluded, the writings in existence and not in existence in Marcion's day, the Pauline corpus of writings as they existed in Marcion's day since he advocated Paul as the only Apostle who rightly understood Jesus' message, what letters were not yet written by Paul in 150 C.E. and what parts of the New Testament surfaced later by the pens of Irenaeus and others in Paul and other Apostles's names. Inherent in all of this of course is discerning the existing theology surround Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, as well as "the Christ." What we shall come to see is that at this time is that normative conservative Judaism had held hope in a coming of a human Messiah. We shall also see that Gnostic Jews and Gentiles held beliefs in a Docetic Cosmic Godman that was not human who was to come to mankind in order to impart secret knowledge in order to liberate the souls trapped in matter; the body. This later understanding of "the Christ" was Paul's Christ expressed by him originally in "allegorical terms." This earliest allegorical understanding of "the Christ" will be completely "literalized" and placed in a historical timeline by Ignatius, Irenaeus, and others in their refutation of the Gnostic Christ.

We then approach this New Testament two thousand years later and encounter a confusing mixture of "allegory" and "literalism" concerning "the Christ" and come away with a blurred understanding not only of the Jewish Messiah but "the Christ" as well. The sad result of this distortion of truth and our failure to recognize and departmentalize what we are reading in the New Testament is often idolatry. Therefore the need to understand these Ancient religious concepts as originally understood by those who first wrote of them. Therefore the reason for this website exploring Marcion and his religious beliefs that spawned the collection of religious documents called the New Testament which originally taught Marcion Gnosticism and not Western



**Christianity.**





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# THE VALENTINIAN GNOSTICS: THE ETERNAL PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL & ITS REMEDY THROUGH A GNOSTIC CHRIST

One of the fundamental questions in all religious systems and the centre of the many religious myths which attempt to answer the question, is the problem of Good and Evil.

**Answer for yourself:** If there is an all-powerful and perfect Being, the originator of all things, how did error and misfortune enter into the Universe?

Because, as we experience it, there patently is error and misfortune in our universe, the argument is often worked backwards from that fact, and the possible existence of an all-perfect Being is then denied. That, of course solves nothing either. The existence of biological order as against chaos has still to be accounted for, as, in fact, has the existence of anything. It is perhaps more difficult to prove that God is not, than that He is - more difficult to answer the question "how did goodness enter a mechanical world?" than the question "how did evil enter a consciously created one?"

In these first centuries of the Christian era the existence of a beneficent God, known by revelation or, as in the case of the Greek philosophers, of an all-perfect First Principle, discovered through metaphysical speculation, was the starting point of all cosmological systems. These basic assumptions being made, the inevitable questions are:

- **where did evil come from and what was its relation to the good?**
- **How did perfection bring forth imperfection?**
- **How did the one changeless and eternal Reality bring forth the transient world of creation?**

Here lay the mystery of mysteries, seemingly beyond the scope of human reason, but for which every religion tries to give an explanation.

The knowledge - the "gnosis", which gave the Gnostics their name - was the knowledge of this mystery of mysteries, and the essence of the Gnostic belief was that this knowledge was indeed beyond ordinary human reason. The Gnostics claimed that somebody had this knowledge and would give it to those human minds which could receive it - but only in the form of myth. How much the Gnostic systems of the second century were the result of their own speculative thinking and how much their interpretation of ancient traditions handed down to them, we do not know. But though the complicated myths which the Gnostics used to explain the existence of good and evil appear, at first sight, to be elaborate and fanciful extravagances, even the Church Fathers who attacked them accepted that a meaning lay beneath these elaborations. They treated most Gnostic schools as Christian, but as misguided and therefore harmful.

## VALENTINUS AND HIS Gnostic SCHOOL

The greatest of the second-century Gnostic thinkers was Valentinus, who was teaching around the year 137 C.E. He established schools in Egypt and Cyprus - schools which were still flourishing there in the fourth century - and then moved to Rome, where he held his most famous school. He never set up a church and has left no books of his teaching - though it is possible that the *Gospel of Truth*, discovered in Nag Hammadi, is largely his work. His pupils, the most famous being Ptolamæus, carried on his school, and it was primarily against them that the Great Church's strongest apologist, **Irenaeus**, (Bishop of Lyons at the end of the second century), wrote his *Adversus Haeresis*. **Hippolytus**, ecclesiastical writer and presbyter of the Church at Rome, also attacked them in his *Philosophumena*, written in about 230 AD. From these two, we learn most of what we know about Valentinus' teaching.

**Valentinus thought of himself as a Christian.** His aim was probably to formulate a Christian philosophy that would make Christian ideas intellectually acceptable to the Hellenized society of Egypt and Rome.

Because of our lack of training and grasp of religions of the first century and their world views, let alone the proper understanding of Ancients' perspectives of God and the emanations from Him, both spirit and matter, the Valentinian myths at first might appear to us to be profane and polytheistic. Yet they were considered even by Irenaeus and Hippolytus to be **metaphysical**, and used to personify human qualities and abstract ideas. Valentinus struggled with the origin of evil and the presence of good in the world as he saw it.

Attempts to explain how evil entered the world have periodically been given in the form of a myth, representing a Cosmic Fall into error. In the Valentinian myth (and there were similar myths in other Gnostic systems) the Fall - unlike the story of Adam and Eve in *Genesis* - took place before the Creation of the world. The Old Testament Fall of Lucifer and his rebellious angels might be considered analogous, but there is a difference and this difference was one of the reasons why the Great Church considered the Gnostics to have turned their back on true Christianity. The Gnostic schools broke with the main Church between 100 and 150 C.E.

**From Greek philosophy, from Eastern teaching, and from Zoroastrian dualism came the Gnostic conception of matter as hostile to the good.** This made yet more acute the problem, not only of how Perfection could bring forth Imperfection, but how it could in any way connect with it.

In Valentinus' system the Pre-beginning was termed Bythos - the Depth, boundless and unqualified, (cf. *Genesis* I:1-2). Together with Bythos, Thought, the female principle [also called Grace or Silence], produced Mind and Truth; and these **four Principles or Powers are the root of all. From these four Principles or Powers came forth further Powers, known as Aeons. These were in pairs, male and female - active and passive principles. The thirtieth of these was called "Sophia", the Desire for Wisdom. It was the error of Sophia that brought about the Fall and made our Universe.**

Writings current at the time such as the **Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament (like Proverbs which was written by Solomon, himself a Pharaoh)** and the works of the writer, known as **"The Shepherd of Hermas"**, had accustomed people to the personification of qualities, so that myth was probably more easily acceptable to them than it is to us.

In the Valentinian myth **Sophia fails to understand her limits and strives to return to the Father of All.** This she cannot do. She is prevented by Horus - the Boundary, the Cross. In the *Acts of John*, one of the Gnostic Apocryphal gospels, is the phrase, "The real effective Cross is the marking off of all things." **In her grief Sophia gives birth to Ildebaath, the shapeless one, from whom came our material world. The essence of this myth is that, though matter- the material of our world - is based on grief and ignorance, yet from the Mother, Sophia, came sparks of eternal, spiritual light and these are imprisoned within the material world.**

**Hostility between Matter and Spirit is a form of dualism, based on contradiction, which enters into**



**many religious systems.** This type of dualism had no part in Irenaeus' teaching. Much of his repudiation of Gnosticism is centered on the Christian principle, developed from the Old Testament, that God, the Creator, made a world that is good. *"And God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).* From that it follows that our bodies are also good.

It is in how they understood the conception of a Creator-God that the Gnostics departed most clearly from what will later be termed "orthodoxy". Nevertheless their conception would have been more intelligible to their Greek hearers than the one based on the Judaic Scriptures.

The Gnostics often equated the God of the Old Testament with the creator of our material world - for them a lesser Power than the Father of All. This Old Testament God of the Jews was not perfect since from Him came a world of suffering, pain, cruelty, and death. This surely is not the work of an all perfect God; therefore a more perfect God had to exist above this imperfect God. In Valentinus' system the Creator-God was limited by ignorance; in many other Gnostic systems He was actively malicious. But all the systems made a distinction between the Unknown and Unknowable Beginning and the lesser Power, who was responsible for the material world.

According to Valentinus, the Eternal Being, Originator of all, did not create a Universe from nothing, but contained all within Himself. He produced emanations, who in their turn produced emanations, spreading ever further from their source. Their ignorance of their source increased continuously as their distance from their Eternal Origin increased, so that error inevitably entered in and finally caused our world. The myth of Sophia's Fall was used to elaborate this teaching. In the *Gospel of Truth* there is the saying, "Ignorance of the Father brought terror and fear, so came error and made forgetfulness."

The idea of an ever increasing number of intermediaries between the Perfect, Changeless One and the multifarious world of material things bridged, for the Gnostic, the "unbridgeable gulf" between Pure Spirit and Matter. And the conception of multiplying "emanations", proceeding further and further from their origin, was the Gnostic answer to the question of how error entered the Universe.

Basilides, another Gnostic teacher, with a school in Alexandria, also taught the doctrine of "Emanation" - the transmission of Life through intermediary beings to man. This never became Church teaching, but a descending hierarchy of Heavenly Powers was described by Dionysius the Areopagite, a mystic writer of the fifth century, and through him the idea entered into the spiritual writings of the Middle Ages. The origin of Basilides' system was connected with Zoroastrianism and not Christianity. He is said to have written, "In the beginning there were Light and Darkness, which existed separately and were not made"; and that, in our world there is mainly Darkness, irradiated with some glimmer of Light. But in his description of the possible rescue of man from this Darkness there are traces of Christian teaching and Christian expressions are used.

Like the teaching of Basilides, the Valentinian system of cosmology was important only in its relation to the spiritual growth of Man. With the Fall of Sophia some seed of her divine origin - a spark of Light - was planted in Gnostic man. Therefore, his soul "cried to God for deliverance" from the prison of the inferior cosmos. The aim of "those who know" was for this spark to return to its source, and the aim of Gnostic teaching was to show how to achieve this. This was their "salvation."

The Valentinian definition of Gnosis is "The redemption of the inner spiritual man". The Gnostics "know" that originally they were spiritual beings, but have now come to live in souls and bodies. Let me say it another way: at one time that part we call our "spirits" and our "souls" was part of God and have not come to reside in matter (body). Their aim is to be reborn into the spiritual world. They held the same concept as we do today; namely, they desired to go to Heaven after they die. Self-knowledge is the key. "He is a Gnostic because he knows by revelation who his true self is", (says a Gnostic writer in R.M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*). In his *Philosophumana*, Hippolytus quotes advice given by a certain Gnostic, Monoimus: *"Abandon the search for God and the Creation... Look for him by taking yourself as the startingpoint.*

Learn who it is who, within you, makes everything his own, and says 'My God, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body.' Learn the source of sorrow, joy, love, hate. Learn how it happens that one watches without willing, becomes angry without willing, rests without willing, loves without willing. If you carefully investigate these matters (the search for God), you will find him in yourself." This is the essence of "salvation;" the knowledge of "the Christ" of God in you...the hope of glory" as Paul spoke. You have come from God and go to God when you die.

In the teaching of Valentinus and in most Gnostic systems, a Redeemer had come from the heavenly realm to enlighten and deliver the immortal part of man, and to save him from being cast back into the sinful world after bodily death; because, from what we know of their writings, the Gnostics seem to have believed in cycles of rebirth. Salvation through a Redeemer, who came to earth with a message of self-discovery in order to show the way for mankind to God and who found his way back to the Father of All was the centre of Valentinus' Gnosticism. *"He became a Way, a Gnosis, a Discovery and a Confirmation," (Gospel of Truth).*

According to Gnosticism this deliverer, who was part of the vast Gnostic myth explaining the origin of the world and of Man, was named Jesus, "the first mystery through whom all emanations flowed forth." But this was not a "human Jesus." This "aeon", Jesus, the summary of all the perfections of the God-head, descended into the womb of the Virgin and so entered into the body of the earthly Christos (Christ). Jesus thus had two persons:

- The psychic Christ, appearing as a man; and
- The in-dwelling Jesus, known only to the true Gnostic.

"Material men were alien to Him and did not discover His appearance or recognize Him... The beloved Son, the embodied Word, came to reveal to the aeons the gnosis of the living Book - to teach, to suffer and to die. He taught in a school. False sages tested Him, but little children came to Him. At death, He divested Himself of these perishable rags, He clothed Himself in imperishability." *(Gospel of Truth)*

The Roman Christians at first accepted Valentinus as a legitimate teacher and he himself, it seems, did not want to break with the main body of the Church. But to the Church leaders his teaching was dangerous, chiefly because of his Gnostic conception of the being of Christ, which was similar to the Docetic doctrine that Jesus was not a man with a human body, but an "appearance", a spiritual presence only; or, as Valentinus probably taught, his body was ethereal, of heavenly substance, totally different from our impure material bodies. The Gnostic idea of an ethereal Redeemer, descending from among the aeons through the spheres of the Universe, would turn the account of Christ's life into a mythological story. And if, as the Gnostics held, Matter were impure, God becoming man was an impossibility.

The Docetic tendency has appeared in different heresies throughout the ages; it even entered into the controversies between "orthodox" Christian writers. The mystery of who Christ was has led to emphasis being laid sometimes on the divine character of Christ, sometimes on the human. In the Gospels, he himself asks, *"Whom do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27).* Many schools of Gnostics believed that the Heavenly Christ entered the man, Jesus, at the moment of his baptism by John and left him at the Crucifixion, when he returned to the Heavens from whence he came; or that at the Crucifixion, it was only a heavenly phantom who appeared to suffer and to die.

It is these two principles:

- The intrinsic evil of Matter and
- The mystical, as against the historical, conception of Christ



**which caused Gnosticism to be considered by the Church to be heretical, and dangerously so. But despite the fact that "heretical" principles were attacked, the "orthodox" teaching has never been completely clear on either point.**

**For many centuries the problem of reconciling the human and the divine nature of Christ caused bitter antagonism among Christians, from the scholarly to the humble. Catholic Church councils will for hundreds of years struggle with this tension between the human and divine nature of Christ.** The very searchings and speculations of the Gnostic schools, judged heretical by the Great Church, became the main impetus in that Church's struggle to reach an exact definition of the relationship between the human and the Divine. In combating the Gnostic systems questions were raised that had to be answered. The fourth-century Bishop, Hilary, wrote in *De Trinitate*, "The error of others caused us to err in daring to embody in human terms truths which ought to be hidden in the silent veneration of the heart."

Perhaps the attempt to "express the inexpressable" leads inevitably to conflict and so to "heresy".

The attempt to combat Gnosticism with definitions was to give rise to further definitions, and then to further arguments about these definitions, and so to accusations and counter-accusations of heresy. Irenaeus, himself, said that there are questions that are unanswerable and must be left in the hand of God. But once the questions were raised and other "heretics" gave their response, it seemed that an official answer had to be given. It may have been necessary to have definitions, but it is possible that the very act of defining distorts the understanding of that which lies beyond logic.

That Matter, and so the material world, is of its nature evil is not Christian doctrine; **but in Christian doctrine the conception of the evil of Matter has often become confused with the war against "the flesh".** The conflict between "flesh" and "spirit" might appear in a less dualistic light if "flesh" were understood, not just as "the body", but as including everything that is not part of the search for God. But it was not generally seen in this light, and **the old idea of the hostility of Matter has pervaded Christianity throughout the ages. It is connected with various forms of asceticism and has led to some exaggerated ascetic doctrines. On occasion, it has even turned what had been described as a religion of joy - the Good News - into one of grim severity.**

**This view of Matter is seen also in the ambivalent attitude of the Church towards sex and marriage. In many Gnostic sects, marriage, or the consummation of marriage, was forbidden, or forbidden to those of the greatest spiritual commitment. This was because of the Gnostic conception of the body as intrinsically evil. The Catholic Church did not hold this doctrine, and marriage became a sacrament. But though it was not until the late twelfth century that celibacy for the priesthood became a definite rule of the Catholic Church, the state of celibacy had long been considered to be of a higher order than that of marriage, and the ancient influence of Dualism has for many centuries caused the Church to look on sex with suspicion and even hostility.**

**The problem of Spirit's relation to Matter was interwoven with the problem of how evil entered into the world.** This also remains one of the unanswered mysteries and, whatever myths are used to explain it, is a cause of conflict for many people. **The complicated Gnostic myths were rejected by the Church and the myth of Adam's Fall accepted.** The story of Adam came from the Old Testament, the original Scripture of the first Christians - the Scripture used to foretell the coming of Christ. **But the Gnostic myth, describing emanations from the Godhead, multiplying and proceeding ever further from Him and therefore ever further into mechanicalness and ignorance, avoided the two great contradictions - an all-powerful perfect Being who consciously introduced evil into the Universe; or a first originator who let evil in by mistake, and therefore was not all-powerful.**

**Both myths - the Old Testament and the Gnostic - implied the need for a Redeemer to rescue mankind from its fallen state.** But the Gnostic myth, when popularized and taken literally, led

**to futile and incomprehensible elaborations; while the myth from *Genesis*, even when popularized and taken literally, was able to give some meaning to the Christian story. Nevertheless, the question of how evil and error entered a world created by a perfect, omniscient God is still a stumbling-block for many and, for many, has never been satisfactorily explained.**





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# GNOSTICISM: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE ROLE OF THE LAW

Gnosticism as we have found is a teaching based on "Gnosis", is a philosophical and religious movement which started in pre-Christian times. The term is derived from the Greek word "gnosis" which means "knowledge". Gnostics claim a secret knowledge about God, humanity, and the rest of the universe of which the general population is unaware. It was the earliest form of Christianity and finds its origins as far back as Egyptian religion. The movement and its literature were essentially wiped out by the end of the 5th century C.E. by heresy hunters from mainline Roman Christianity. Gnosticism consisted of many syncretistic belief systems which combined elements from Egypt, Babylon, Greek, Syrian, and Asian religions. Gnosticism also finds expression within Judaism as well as Early Christianity. Important for our studies here is the fact that it was the religious beliefs of Gnostics that was the impetus to the collection of religious documents that framed the First New Testament.

Gnosticism expresses its truths through the medium of myth. Indeed, one finds that most Gnostic scriptures take the forms of myths. The term "myth" should not here be taken to mean "stories that are not true", but rather, that the truths embodied in these myths are of a different order from the dogmas of theology or the statements of philosophy.

It need to be said that it is impossible to give a single definition of Gnosticism since there were many different types of Gnosticism in the Second and Third Centuries. Yet fundamental to all of them is the fact that Gnostics believed that they alone truly understood "the Christ's" message and that other streams of thought within Christianity has misunderstood it as revealed through Jesus' mission and sayings. It would behove us to listen to what these Gnostics and Early Christians believed before Rome would later refute such beliefs with their Second New Testament.

## GNOSTICISM AND HOW IT DEALT WITH THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:

### THE COSMOS

All religious traditions acknowledge that the world is imperfect. Where they differ is in the explanations which they offer to account for this imperfection and in what they suggest might be done about it. Gnostics have their own view of these matters: they hold that the world is flawed because it was created in a flawed manner. Gnostics did not look upon the world as having been created perfectly and then having degenerated as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Rather the world was seen as being evil at the time of its origin, having been created by an inferior "deity" or God; not the True God. Since God is good and matter is evil, God could not have created the world directly. God first created Æons. As these paired up in syzygies they gave rise to more Æons. The multitude of Æons make up the Pleroma. The word "Pleroma" means "fullness". It refers to all existence beyond matter. In other words it is the world of the Æons and Archons and of our own

## spark, or spirit.

*Col 1:19 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; (KJV)*

You should find it rather surprising that Paul uses a key Gnostic word and concept to refer to "the Christ." Let us see for certain as we examine the word for Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

4138 pleroma-

- 1) what is (has been) filled
- a) a ship inasmuch as it is filled (that is, manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers
- **b) in the New Testament, the body of believers, as what is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ**
- 2) what fills or with which a thing is filled
  - a) used of those things which a ship is filled, freight and merchandise, sailors, oarsmen, soldiers
  - b) completeness or fullness of time
- 3) fullness, abundance
- 4) a fulfilling, a keeping

**The above passage is just one of the many passages from the New Testament which, when coupled with knowledge of Gnosticism and what it teaches, reveals Paul in completely new light that what Western Roman Christianity wished the world to know.**

According to Gnosticism the material world came about by a mistake made by an ignorant being or an anti-god. Some claim the world is an abortion generated by Sophia while others blame it on an "Inferior God" they call the Demiurge. Either way this material imperfection and the origin of evil is laid not at the feet of the True God of love but at the successive emanated Æons that derive and evolve from the True God.

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Does it appear to you that Paul believed that there was an "evil god" at work in this world? This is a Gnostic dogma that goes unnoticed since today we have been taught to connect this idea principally with Satan and not with Gnosticism. If you have ever taken the time to investigate what Jews and Jewish Gnostics believed about Ha-Satan then you would see that this Satan is not whom Christianity has portrayed him to be. But that is another study for another time.

**If you noticed I have already quoted Paul twice as an example of two major Gnostic teachings in this short opening of this article. Rome will go to great lengths to cover up the fact that Paul was a Gnostic; even forging the Pastoral Epistles which will be passed off in Paul's name in order to make it appear as if Paul was anti-Gnostic when in fact he was not.**

Like Buddhism, Gnosticism begins with the fundamental recognition that earthly life is filled with suffering. In order to nourish themselves, all forms of life consume each other, thereby visiting pain, fear, and death upon one another (even herbivorous animals live by destroying the life of plants). In addition, so-called natural catastrophes -- earthquakes, floods, fires, drought, volcanic eruptions -- bring further suffering and death in their wake. Human beings, with their complex physiology and psychology, are aware not only of these painful features of earthly existence. They also suffer from the frequent recognition that they are strangers living in a world that is flawed and absurd.

**Many religions advocate that humans are to be blamed for the imperfections of the world.** Many have invented the doctrine of "original sin" in order to teach lay the blame for evil at the feet of mankind. Supporting this view, they interpret the Genesis myth as declaring that transgressions committed by the first human pair brought about a "fall" of creation resulting in the present corrupt state of the world. Gnostics



respond that this interpretation of the myth is false. **Gnostics differ in the blame for the world's failings lies not with humans, but with the creator.** Since -- especially in the monotheistic religions -- the creator is God, this Gnostic position appears at first almost blasphemous, and is often viewed with dismay even by non-believers.

**Answer for yourself:** But upon reflection and study of the Hebrew Scriptures where we find that this Creator God of the Old Testament created "evil" for His purposes, then are the Gnostics right? Do we look to God or an "Inferior God" for the origin of evil?

*Isa 54:16 16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. (KJV)*

*Isa 45:6-7 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. (KJV)*

Without a doubt the role of "evil" and its origin have perplexed theologians and philosophers since the dawn of time. There are many different "theologies" expressing competing views as to the origin of this imperfect creation in which we live. **Let us remember for a second that it was Marcion, a Gnostic, that found the need to collect the First New Testament and did so with a typical understanding of "evil" according to Gnostic "theology."** What we will see below is akin to in many ways to the "Gnosticism" of Egypt and the Kaballah of the Jews. Let us see these similarities for ourselves when we examine the role of "evil" in the world as Gnostic Christians understood it.

Ways of evading the recognition of the flawed creation and its flawed creator have been devised over and over, but none of these arguments have impressed Gnostics. The ancient Greeks, especially the Platonists, advised people to look to the harmony of the universe, so that by venerating its grandeur they might forget their immediate afflictions. But since this harmony still contains the cruel flaws, loneliness and alienation of existence, this advice is considered of little value by Gnostics. Nor is the Eastern idea of Karma regarded by Gnostics as an adequate explanation of creation's imperfection and suffering. Karma at best can only explain how the chain of suffering and imperfection works. It does not inform us in the first place why such a sorrowful and malign system should exist.

**Once the initial shock of the "unusual" nature of the Gnostic explanation for suffering and imperfection of the world wears off, one may begin to recognize that it is in fact the most sensible of all explanations; especially in light of the origin of "evil" as taught by the Hebrew Scriptures.** To appreciate it fully, however, a familiarity with the Gnostic conception of the Godhead is required, both in its original essence as the True God and in its debased manifestation as the false or creator God.

## **DEITY AS GNOSTICS UNDERSTOOD IT....AGAIN TYPICAL OF MARCION WHO GAVE US THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT**

The Gnostic God concept is more subtle than that of most religions. In its way, it unites and reconciles the recognitions of Monotheism and Polytheism, as well as of Theism, Deism and Pantheism.

In the Gnostic view, there is a true, ultimate and transcendent God, who is beyond all created universes and who never created anything in the sense in which the word "create" is ordinarily understood. While this True God did not fashion or create anything, He (or, It) **"emanated" or brought forth from within Himself the substance of all there is in all the worlds, visible and invisible.** In a certain sense, it may therefore be true to say that **all is God, for all consists of the substance of God. By the same token, it must also be recognized that many portions of the original divine essence have been projected so far from their source that they underwent unwholesome changes in the process.** To worship the cosmos, or nature, or

embodied creatures is thus tantamount to worshipping alienated and corrupt portions of the emanated divine essence.

*Ps 82:1 1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. (KJV)*

*Ps 82:6 6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. (KJV)*

The basic Gnostic myth has many variations, but all of these refer to Æons, intermediate deific beings who exist between the ultimate, True God and ourselves. It might help us to imagine a latter between "pure spirit" and "matter." Between such poles of this latter lie a variety of spiritual entities. "Æons" is the term appropriated by Gnostic heresiologists to designate the series of spiritual powers evolved by progressive emanation from the eternal Being, which constituted the Pleroma or invisible spiritual world, as distinct from the Kenoma, or visible material world.

The word aeon (aion) signifying "age", "the ever-existing", "eternity", came to be applied to the divine eternal power, and to the personified attributes of that power, whence it was extended to designate the successive emanations from the divinity which the Gnostics conceived as necessary intermediaries between the spiritual and the material worlds. The Gnostic concept of the aeon may be traced to the influence of a philosophy which postulated a divinity incapable of any contact with the material world or with evil, and the desire to reconcile this philosophy with the Christian notion of a direct interference of God in the affairs of the material world, and particularly in the Creation and Redemption of man.

The word aeon (aion) signifying "age", "the ever-existing", "eternity", came to be applied to the divine eternal power, and to the personified attributes of that power, whence it was extended to designate the successive emanations from the divinity which the Gnostics conceived as necessary intermediaries between the spiritual and the material worlds.

Jewish angelology, which represented Jehovah ministered to by a court of celestial beings, and Hellenic religious systems, which imagined a number of intermediaries between the finite and the infinite, suggested the emanation from the divinity of a series of subordinate heavenly powers, each less perfect, the further removed it was from the supreme deity, until at length increasing imperfection would serve as the connecting link between the spiritual world and the material world of evil.

The word "aeon" thus includes both Sophia, the Logos, and "the Christ" as well as other high principles. Sophia is most likely a new concept for most. "Sophia" means "wisdom". Like the Logos this is a primal form. While the Logos is personified as male, Sophia is female. Logos has a direct and intellectual basis for guidance, Sophia is inspirational and sensual. The basic idea is comparable to the Shekinah, or "Holy Spirit".

These Æons, together with the True God, comprise the realm of Fullness (Pleroma) wherein the potency of divinity operates fully. The Fullness stands in contrast to our existential state, which in comparison may be called emptiness.

In different Gnostic systems the hierarchy of Æons was diversely elaborated. But in all are recognizable a mixture of Platonic, mythological, and Christian elements. There is always the primitive all-perfect Æon, the fountain-head of divinity, and a co-eternal companion Æon. In other words there are in reality "two" which make up the one; think of these as "masculine" and "feminine" attributes of the "One True God." From these emanate a second pair who, in turn, engender other pairs, generally in pairs, or in groups of pairs, in keeping with the Egyptian idea of divine couples.



**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that much of what we believe today about God in both Judaism and Christianity finds its origin in Egypt? Yes, oh yes, but this information will come in time as your knowledge of the origin of your faith grows. Just don't forget Egypt; the first Monotheistic faith in the world which would over time influence and spawn Judaism as well as Christianity. Sadly this knowledge is almost lost today and blurred almost beyond recognition due to Greece and Rome. But that is another study for another day.

One of these inferior Æons, desiring to know the unknowable, to penetrate the secrets of the primal Æon, brings disorder into the Æon-world, is exiled, and brings forth a very imperfect Æon, who, being unworthy of a place in the Pleroma, brings the divine spark to the nether world. Then follows the creation of the material universe. In Egypt they understood this Divine Order and the introduction into this perfection of "disorder" and it is from these Ancient concepts that later Gnostics, both Jews and Christians, would inherit these same ideas that have been with mankind since its beginning.

One of the aeonial beings who bears the name Sophia ("Wisdom") is of great importance to the Gnostic world view. In the course of her journeyings, Sophia came to emanate from her own being a flawed consciousness, a being who became the creator of the material and psychic cosmos, all of which he created in the image of his own flaw. This being, unaware of his origins, imagined himself to be the ultimate and absolute God. Since he took the already existing divine essence and fashioned it into various forms, he is also called the Demiurgos or "half-maker". There is an authentic half, a true deific component within creation, but it is not recognized by the half-maker and by his cosmic minions, the Archons or "rulers". Archons refer to the creators and governing forces in the material world. The Demiurge is an archon, as are his offspring the angels. The "Demiurge" or "Craftsman" is understood by Gnostics as the real creator of the material world. This Demiurge is usually viewed in a negative fashion. If nothing else, the material is less than the spirit so that the creator of the physical imperfect world is lower than the prime source.

Finally, there is evolved the Æon Christ, who is to restore harmony (Egypt called it "Ma'at") in the Æon-world, and heal the disorder in the material world consequent upon the catastrophe in the ideal order, by giving to man the knowledge which will rescue him from the dominion of matter and evil. This Æon Christ is understood to be a pure "spiritual entity" having no flesh. Gnostics rejected the idea of incarnation completely. The Christ, Logos, or Sophia, or Divine Being only "appeared" to take on human form and only "seemed" to suffer. This is called Docetism.

**Answer for yourself:** Could this explain Paul's lack of interest in the "human Jesus" since only mentioning two of his teachings consisting of only two sentences in the whole New Testament which is 2/3 Pauline literature? Yes.

**Answer for yourself:** This is a hard question but one that has to be asked eventually. Can this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" by which the Earliest Christian Gnostics understood "the Christ" be the possible reason why there is absolutely no explicit or unquestionable references to Jesus in any literature or in any recorded history outside of the New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Owing to this lack of explicit historical and literary record concerning the human Jesus outside the New Testament then is it possible that Rome, in their Second New Testament, countered Marcion's and other Gnostic's "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" by "literalizing" the concept of "the Christ" and placing this concept in a historical timeline in Palestine? I will let you ponder this possibility and struggle with these questions as I do.

The number of Æons varies with different system but the idea of "intermediacy" remains the same between the True God Whom is pure spirit and physical matter. If you are acquainted with the Jewish Kaballah then it might again surprise you that Kaballah existed in much the same form as today since at least before the Exodus from Egypt. There ARE Egyptian elements clearly stamped-upon Kaballah as evidenced by quotations from Egyptian funerary texts which say *"Now I have come to the Tree of the Children (the "Tree Of Life" is*

*a central theme of Kaballist lore,) and the Rosy-Faced ('angelic') Beings are with me."* Other similarities seem to many scholars as well as myself to establish Egypt as the ancestral home of this Mystical Science. Thus we find the same concepts as "emanation" from the Primal Cause as expressed by Gnosticism existing as far back in Egyptian Religion?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it possibly be that all religions that we find in the world today have likewise "emanated" from Egypt in various stages of "purity" as well as "devolution?" YES! Then are such Gnostic ideas of God and the origin of "evil" to be discounted so quickly as Rome would have us believe? I think not!

## THE HUMAN BEING

Gnostics teach us that human nature mirrors the duality found in the world: in part it was made by the false creator God and in part it consists of the light of the True God. In other words within the physical realm we find a mixture of "evil" and "goodness." The role and origin of "evil" has haunted mankind from his beginning and explaining it and laying it at the feet of a Perfect Creator God has not been easy for mankind to do; therefore he invents myths to explain this duality of "light" and "darkness"; of "evil" and "goodness." Such myths were the perfect way to explain the "unexplainable."

Let us look a little deeper. Humankind contains a perishable physical and psychic component, as well as a spiritual component which is a fragment of the divine essence. This latter part is often symbolically referred to as the "divine spark". The recognition of this dual nature of the world and of the human being has earned the Gnostic tradition the epithet of "dualist". This concept of Dualism and the "tension" between the Divine Nature and the Corrupt Nature we see in physical existence is undeniable.

This might be news to you but Paul was a Gnostic and typical of Gnostic theology is the following "dualism."

*Gal 5:17 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (KJV)*

Humans are generally ignorant of the divine spark (spirit) resident within them. Sin or evil is defined as matter, ignorance, formlessness, distortion, lack of order, and the lack of harmony. There is no moral element involved. The self is imprisoned in the soul and body which are evil. An important concept is the descent of the soul into matter in the creation of mankind. The body becomes for the soul a type of prison.

*Rom 7:24 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (KJV)*

There is an answer and that is obtaining salvation through knowledge and self effort as we shall see.

*Ps 14:1-3 1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did we just see "Gnosis" and "Gnosticism" in the Hebrew Scriptures? We sure did as both the Hebrew Scriptures and Judaism stressed the importance of the knowledge of God and acquiring it.

Man is responsible for getting in touch with "self-knowledge" of the God within himself. This ignorance of man's true essence as taught by Gnostics is fostered in human nature by the influence of the false creator and his Archons, who together are intent upon keeping men and women ignorant of their true nature and destiny. Anything that causes us to remain attached to earthly things serves to keep us in enslavement to these lower



cosmic rulers. Death releases the divine spark from its lowly prison (the body), but if there has not been a substantial work of Gnosis undertaken by the soul prior to death, it becomes likely that the divine spark will be hurled back into, and then re-embodied within, the pangs and slavery of the physical world.

Not all humans are spiritual (pneumatics) and thus ready for Gnosis and liberation. Gnosis might be a new term so let us try to understand it.

**While the literal translation for this word "gnosis" is "knowledge", its meaning is closer to "insight" or "enlightenment".** Rather than an intellectual understanding then, it is a "knowledge of the heart" or wisdom (which is not meant to imply mere emotionalism). While any religion that places an emphasis on esoteric understanding as a spiritual goal can be said to have gnosis (small "g") it has become common practice to spell it "Gnosis" (capital "G") when referring to the syncretic movements of the late antiquities. Some extend this definition to include related movements such as Kabbalah and the Classical Hermeticism of Egypt. This system is of course arbitrary and not used by all, but is very useful in written dialogue.

It goes without saying that the term "Gnostic" has been differentiated according to the use of upper or lower case letters. Spelled "gnosticism" it refers to the form which is used by various related, but externally different groups. These include Kabbalah, etc.. The Hellenic Gnostics, etc (this modern usage of the word that started in about the 1800s). Spelled "Gnosticism" it refers specifically to the Christian and Jewish groups from the 1st through 5th centuries A.D. who believed salvation to be in gnosis rather than through faith in a false vicarious atonement.

Spiritual men are called pneumatics since they alone have received the special knowledge and are destined to salvation from birth. The Spiritual man is conscious of already being freed by his gnosis. Psychic men are called psychics since they have the potential to receive the special knowledge but have not yet been initiated. If they fail to receive this knowledge they will perish with the world. Fleshly or physical men are called sarkics since they have no chance of being freed from the material world and are destined from birth to perish.

Some are earthbound and materialistic beings (hylics), who recognize only the physical reality. Others live largely in their psyche (psychics). **Such people usually mistake the Demiurge for the True God and have little or no awareness of the spiritual world beyond matter and mind.**

In the course of history, humans progress from materialistic sensate slavery, by way of ethical religiosity, to spiritual freedom and liberating Gnosis.

## **GNOSTICS AND HOW THEY UNDERSTOOD THE SALVATION OF THE CHRIST**

**Answer for yourself:** Do you remember that Marcion, who gave us the First New Testament, and who ONLY advocated Paul, himself a Gnostic, as the only one who correctly understood "the Christ" and his message, is responsible for giving us the earliest understanding of the Christians and their understanding of the Christ?

Let us never forget this! It behooves us to understand the earliest Christians' understanding of "salvation" in light of what Rome would do later by injecting "vicarious atonement" into the New Testament as associated with "the Christ" in the form of Jesus of Nazareth. If you have had the opportunity to study our "Atonement" articles then you have now seen for yourself how the Jewish Sacrificial System operated and how "Atonement" was actually achieved and you have seen that it has been sadly misrepresented in the New Testament as connected with Jesus' death. We saw it very clearly that such "sun worship" of the crucified sungods was applied to the life of Jesus by Rome and their Second New Testament. Now let us look at how the earliest Christians understood "salvation" before it was changed.

**Answer for yourself:** Just by any chance does this Gnostic understanding of salvation find its roots again in Egypt, the world's first Monotheistic Faith? Take a guess! Yes!

Gnostics explain it this way. Humans are caught in a predicament consisting of physical existence combined with ignorance of their true origins, their essential nature and their ultimate destiny (to return to God). To be liberated from this predicament, human beings require help, although they must also contribute their own efforts. Salvation consists in removing defilement by illumination or dispelling ignorance of mankind's true self...that he a manifestation of God, Whom is pure Spirit, living in and through the physical matter of the body. Redemption is escaping the material prison of the body and the world through special knowledge. There is no mention of resurrection but only of escape. This knowledge consists in realizing one's heavenly home and the way back to the world of light. Cosmic redemption is the process where all the particles of light (sparks) trapped in creation are released and join together again in the world of light.

From earliest times Messengers of the Light (Avatars) have come forth from the True God in order to assist humans in their quest for this Gnosis (knowledge). Only a few of these salvific figures are mentioned in Gnostic scripture; some of the most important are Seth (the third Son of Adam), Jesus, and the Prophet Mani. The majority of Gnostics always looked to Jesus as the principal savior figure (the Soter). Again remember we are not speaking of "vicarious atonement" as the type of salvation in question here.

Gnostics do not look to salvation from sin (original or other), but rather from the ignorance of which sin is a consequence.

**Answer for yourself:** Did Paul ever mention "original sin"? No! I wonder why? He was Gnostic and did not believe in such things. Rome will try to cover this fact up by blurring the truth by editing the Gnostic First New Testament

Ignorance -- whereby is meant ignorance of spiritual realities -- is dispelled only by Gnosis (knowledge), and the decisive revelation of Gnosis is brought by the Messengers of Light, especially by Christ, the Logos of the True God. It is not by his suffering and death but by his life of teaching and his establishing of mysteries that Christ has performed His work of salvation.

We need to understand that the "Logos" can mean "word" but more importantly the Logos is the light that gives us Gnosis via communication. Thus it is the Christ (not to be confused with Jesus). First there was a thought, then the word, and thus God spake to create. We pass on knowledge in this world through words. It is something that gives us guidance by "seeing" or a certain amount of comprehension.

In Gnostic theology, "the Christ" (as the intermediary between spirit and matter) joined with the soul of Jesus of Nazareth. Through Jesus "the Christ" dwelt "without measure" and through Jesus "the Christ" brought his message to Israel in hopes that as God's Holy Nation that they would be a light unto the whole world. Now pay close attention. According to Gnostic Christianity, everyone has their own "Christ" within them as Jesus did. To better understand this concept the word "Christ" means "anointing;" the "anointing of the True God.

The Gnostic concept of salvation, like other Gnostic concepts, is a subtle one. On the one hand, Gnostic salvation may easily be mistaken for an unmediated individual experience, a sort of spiritual do-it-yourself project. Gnostics hold that the potential for Gnosis, and thus, of salvation is present in every man and woman, and that salvation is not vicarious but individual. At the same time, they also acknowledge that Gnosis and salvation can be, indeed must be, stimulated and facilitated in order to effectively arise within consciousness. This stimulation is supplied by Messengers of Light who, in addition to their teachings, establish salvific mysteries (sacraments) which can be administered by apostles of the Messengers and their successors.

One needs also remember that knowledge of our true nature -- as well as other associated realizations -- are withheld from us by our very condition of earthly existence. The True God of transcendence is unknown in this



world, in fact He is often called the Unknown Father.

**Answer for yourself:** Did not Paul preach a sermon in Athens to this "Unknown God"? He sure did; again a mark of Paul's Gnosticism. Understand the Pastoral Epistles, falsely attributed to Paul by Rome, and other alterations of the Pauline corpus of epistles was undertaken by Rome to make it appear as if Paul was "anti-Gnostic" when in fact he was just the opposite.

It is thus obvious that revelation from on High is needed to bring about salvation. The indwelling spark must be awakened from its terrestrial slumber by the saving knowledge that comes "from without".

## CONDUCT...ETHICS...AND THE ROLE OF THE LAW

If the words "ethics" or "morality" are taken to mean a system of rules, then Gnosticism is opposed to them both. Now we understand why Gnostics like Marcion and Paul were opposed to "the Torah" and "the Law" as we find in the Pauline epistles. According to Gnosticism such systems that try to perfect this physical realm which is to them impossible (it is beyond saving) usually originate with the Demiurge and are covertly designed to serve his purposes. Now pay attention. If, on the other hand, morality is said to consist of an inner integrity arising from the illumination of the indwelling spark, then the Gnostic will embrace this spiritually informed existential ethic as ideal.

*Now we can understand why Paul taught "righteousness without the Law."*

To the Gnostic, commandments and rules are not salvific; they are not substantially conducive to salvation. Rules of conduct may serve numerous ends, including the structuring of an ordered and peaceful society, and the maintenance of harmonious relations within social groups. Rules, however, are not relevant to salvation; that is brought about only by Gnosis. Morality therefore needs to be viewed primarily in temporal and secular terms; it is ever subject to changes and modifications in accordance with the spiritual development of the individual.

Antinomianism might be a new word for some. Gnostics were Antinomians. Antinomianism refers to the belief that legal precepts are no longer applicable to a "saved" individual. The word has come to be used in regards to any libertine doctrines in common phraseology concerning Gnosticism. Thus the groups that are experiential rather than ascetic have been referred to as antinomian. While it is pretty obvious that the "any thing goes" ideas that have been ascribed to Gnostics like Carpocrates and Corinthus are off mark, the inverse theories that some scholars have forwarded are also unlikely. Truth is more likely closer to the center in that while there have been movements that place an emphasis on experience (semi-libertine), and others on separation (semi-ascetic), neither sets of ideas were necessarily mutually exclusive. Because matter is seen as evil and the spirit, or light particles, as good, Gnostics developed two systems of ethics. The libertines felt that because the body was evil and would perish it didn't matter what one did in the body. Some even felt it was a sign of superior knowledge to engage in gross immorality just to demonstrate one's freedom. The ascetics felt that because the body was evil all its impulses must be suppressed as much as possible in order to prepare oneself for the journey to the light realm. Conscious of being already emancipated by his Gnosis, the Gnostic demonstrated this freedom either by asceticism or libertinism, or even a peculiar combination of both. Paul again is a great example in this regard.

*1 Cor 6:12 12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 10:23 23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (KJV)*

coupled with the above is the next Pauline treatise advocating asceticism:

*1 Cor 7:7-9 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. (KJV)*

Answer for yourself: Did you notice that in the above two passages that we find Paul's asceticism as well as or libertinism? As instructed previously we see Paul's disregard or need for the Law as he nullifies the importance and need for the Law as Judaism taught. After that we see Paul's strange asceticism in his advocacy of celibacy. This is all the more strange for a supposed "Pharisee of Pharisees" since such a stance breaks the first Commandment in the Hebrew Scriptures which teaches mankind to marry and bear children. So we have in Paul a perfect example of his unique Gnostic stance; on the one hand a libertinism where the Law is abolished for him and he puts himself above the Torah and the other where he violates the very first Commandment to marry and produce children. Stranger even still is that the failure to bear children was considered a curse in Judaism. And Paul would have the reader believe that this is to be emulated. Strange is it not for one who is portrayed as a "Pharisee of Pharisees" is it not?

*Phil 3:5 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; (KJV)*

Something is amiss. We have the answer: Paul is a Gnostic made to look completely different by the textual manipulation of the First New Testament. Coupled with the fact that Marcion, who was a Gnostic and who gave us the First New Testament, is the fact concerning Marcion's hatred of the Jews; yet we find Marcion embracing Paul as the "only" one who understood correctly the message of "the Christ." As a Gnostic Marcion and Paul therefore shared the common belief that the Law of God was useless for perfecting the flesh or the material world which was for them "unredeemable." Thus the anti-Law bias in Paul and his letters.

## CONCLUSION

Gnosticism was a fully developed system in the first century which predates Christianity. It was not the result of the Hellenization of Christianity but was a system that syncretized many elements of not only Eastern mystery religions but takes many of its tenants from ancient Egyptian religion; the first Monotheistic faith in this world. Gnosticism provided easy-made terminology for many Christian ideas, thought the terms did not completely transform the ideas but remained in tension. Many scholars like Schmithals (The Office Of Apostle in the Early Church, pp. 115-230) stress that Christianity was influenced by ancient Gnosticism where many of the concepts as well as terminology were borrowed directly from a fully-developed Gnosticism. Many scholars today will show us how Paul imposed a Gnostic redeemer myth upon the historical Jesus (Walls, "Gnosticism. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. Vol 2. pp. 736-739).

**Answer for yourself:** If Paul was anti-Gnostic as Rome and the Second New Testament depicts then why do so many Gnostics use his letters to support their doctrines, even claiming that Paul was the source of their Gnostic theology? Why don't they repudiate Paul instead of embracing him?

These are things that lay behind the guise of the Second New Testament which we inherited from Rome which blurs if not destroys the earliest beliefs of the Earliest Christians. It is time we not only become aware of this hidden Gnosticism that goes undetected on the pages of our New Testaments but give strong consideration to the prior concepts of the Early Christians concerning the origin of evil, their understanding of God, "the Christ," and the Law.





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# GNOSTICISM AND THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL

To better understand the theology of "salvation" of Marcion who saw the need for the First New Testament we need to understand his mindset. To understand the role of the "Savior" as understood by Marcion and other Christian Gnostics in the first century and their concepts of "the Christ" before Rome would later refute and alter them then it is necessary to understand man's predicament as understood by these earliest Christians. Man was in need of salvation from something. You might be very surprised just what this salvation was in light it was these "minds" that gave us the very First New Testament. What we will see over time is that this earliest concept of man's need for salvation is starkly different from the one Rome will give the world later. Again we have the tension between "allegorical" and later "literal" exegesis; between the "allegorical Gnostic Christians" and the later "literal anti-Gnostic Roman Christians."

## THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL

According to Gnostic theology, a series of "falling away" from the Whole that is God occurred in eternity which resulted in all that there is today. After the first "fall", the divine consciousness descended to the level of the divided consciousness; now after another "fall", it has fallen even further, into the depths of the unconscious; it has been "forgotten". Man has forgotten from where he came and where he is to return following this life. It is now humanity's privilege to discover the potential dimensions of human existence and face the great challenge of the "ascension of consciousness" through the Man-God-Spirit transformation.

Once souls fell into the lower levels of consciousness, they became enamored of it and burned with the desire to experience the pleasures of matter. The souls then no longer wanted to disengage itself from these lower levels. Thus the world was born. From that moment souls forgot themselves. They forgot they original habitation, their true center and eternal being.

All Gnosticism proceeds from one fundamental existential insight: this world in which we find ourselves is thoroughly and irretrievably **evil**. The soul is trapped in the prison of matter, and matter is intrinsically evil. According to Gnostic theology, the creation of the cosmos came about as the result of a tragicomic mistake: the fall of the Soul. Thanks to the advent of "the Christ" in the lower dimensions of consciousness, the power of reconciling the fallen souls has been given to rebalance the Godhead and issue in the kingdom of Light over the kingdom of matter. The safety of the Godhead is assured thanks to the introduction of the new uniting force, "the Christ."

Humanity does not comprehend the omnipotent power created for us until we utilize "the Christ" power which resides in each person. When we effectively use the omnipotent Christ power, the Savior, who is our advocate, provides wisdom over our world of negative and demi-god characters. Humanity has the power to help in this great process of redemption. He is able, through his prayers and mental labor to bring forth certain types of "Christ awareness" - to liberate the imprisoned sparks of divinity and rejoin them to their source. Thus the divine plan of creation will be restored, the divine outpouring will descend from on high in the form of the messianic Christ "gnosis" -bringing knowledge and salvation to the embodied forms of ignorance within man. Through all of this, the world will be redeemed.

**Christ can only save the soul by his call "awake, remember who you are and where you come from!" and then by his revelation of the Gnosis.** But since the soul cannot by itself hear the Gnosis, Christ has to resort to the elaborate stratagem of creating the cosmos of ideas, setting in motion a chain of events which open the corridor of the Mid-Heavens and eventually create the conditions by which all souls will be saved.

Christian Gnostics felt that initiation into the cosmic Logos is inseparable from "the Light which lighteth every person coming into the world," - the higher Self that is one with the Source. It is this higher Self which each individual must be at one with if he would be saved through the cosmic Logos, namely, brought back to his original spirit, consciousness and glory. As more and more people hear the call "wake up!", attain the Gnosis and are liberated, their souls are received back into the bosom of Universal Divine Consciousness.

**Answer for yourself:** In an earlier article I mention the fact that Paul was a Gnostic and that much of the Second New Testament, written by proto-Roman Catholics to combat and refute the Gnosticism of Marcion and other early Christian Gnostics, was later written to conceal this fact. So let us see what Paul has to say on this matter. Below is just one reference among many where Paul's Gnostic theology is removed from the "allegorical" and translated into the "literal" by our conditioning by hearing such approaches to Pauline thought since childhood.

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

Again we approach the Pauline literature in the New Testament never realizing that Paul is speaking about a non-human "Christ."

**Answer for yourself:** Was Paul telling dead people to rise from the dead, or was he speaking in typical Gnostic allegorical terms and terminology calling people to become aware of "the Christ" and "Logos" that dwells within them? Over and over again Paul speaks about "light" and the tension between "light" and "darkness" in his epistles.

*Eph 5:8 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (KJV)*

*2 Cor 4:6 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge [Gnosis] of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God [as the Logos], should shine unto them. (KJV)*

*Col 1:12 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (KJV)*

*1Thes 5:5 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (KJV)*

**The above passages are only a few of the Pauline passages that refer to "light;" a typical Gnostic "buzz-word"!**

According to Gnostics, the soul shall thus be freed from matter, and this world shall cease to be. There is nothing to be done for this world except end it, and Gnostics are the active workers seeking to achieve this by cultivating their higher selves to seek reunification with the Godhead. The object was to become one with "the Christ". All of Romans chapter six recalls this unity with "the Christ."



But each soul returning to its divine source has to pass through the various levels of consciousness. Usually there were seven of these, other times ten, and they were planetary realms. On one hand, they were conceived of as the "seven heavens", and on the other as seven demonic barriers between humanity and God. It was possible to pass each of these barriers through divine Gnosis. Through this higher knowledge, a gnosis of salvation, can the divine be directly experienced.

This is the whole intent of the Pauline corpus which escapes us today. We approach Pauline literature with a literalistic viewpoint never realizing that this literature was to be understood not literally but "allegorically." Paul was never intending to speak of a human Jesus in his epistles. Again we saw in a previous article where Paul only mentions two single sentences about what the historical Jesus taught; thus explaining why Paul shows little or no emphasis upon a human Jesus but a Cosmic Christ. The object for Paul, as it has been since the beginning of time, was to be "in Christ" whereby one perceives this "mystery" of These concepts are the same.

Now let us look at Paul's reference to this Gnostic "mystery" which is later expounded by Paul as "being in Christ."

- *Rom 16:25 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (KJV)*
- *1 Cor 2:7 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom [Gnosis], which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (KJV)*
- *Eph 1:9 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:3 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge [Gnosis] in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:9 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ [Logos]: (KJV)*
- *Eph 6:19 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (KJV)*
- *Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)*
- *Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*
- *Col 2:2 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; (KJV)*
- *Col 4:3 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: (KJV)*

Let us refocus for a minute. Paul preaches a "Christ in you" which is the hope for everyman; once he comes to this knowledge [Gnosis]. Paul recognizes the need for mankind to come to awareness of "the Christ" within and the further revelation of self-knowledge which leads to one's salvation through "Christ in you." The crux of Paul's salvation message is the awareness of being "in Christ."

*Rom 8:1-2 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk*

*not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (KJV)*

*Rom 9:1 CHAPTER 9 1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (KJV)*

*Rom 12:5 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (KJV)*

*Rom 16:7 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. (KJV)*

*Rom 16:10 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 1:2 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (KJV)*

*1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)*

*1 Cor 15:18 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 15:22 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (KJV)*

*2 Cor 1:21 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; (KJV)*

*2 Cor 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (KJV)*

*2 Cor 5:19 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)*

*2 Cor 12:19 19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. (KJV)*

**I recognize that this is new knowledge for most of us. This goes to show us how far we have strayed from God's original truth as taught by the Ancients. We have received as Christians today a totally corrupt understanding of God and true faith as once held by the Ancients, Egyptians, and Jews. Instead of a focus only upon God we have been diverted to focus on a "literally incarnated Christ in human form" which takes much of the glory away from the True God. Such is idolatry that goes undetected by most today.**

**To better understand Pauline thought we need to familiarize ourselves with the "Logos" in relation to "the Christ."**





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## THE EARLIEST GOSPEL...HAVE WE HEARD IT?

Everybody loves a good mystery novel or a great mystery movie. Well at least I do. But these are nothing in comparison to what I discovered during and after Seminary as my studies of the New Testament became more intense and more involved. Over the next years I would be consumed at uncovering more of the puzzle pieces necessary in order to correctly understand the literature and its true meaning which I was reading in the New Testament. I quickly found during Seminary that I had on my hands a "rubik's cube" or sorts; a jumble of "theologies" that often complemented one another and conflicted with one another. Believing in my heart that God is not the author of confusion I had to know what was going on here so I began during and after Seminary during my Pastoral years to dig as hard as I could into the many nagging problems surrounding the Christian New Testament.

I quickly discovered as my studies deepened that the New Testament, as it stands today, is a dichotomy of sorts where basically two theological camps are contesting for supremacy and "orthodoxy". We will see this more clearly throughout this website but basically for now understand that the New Testament we have today is not the same as the First New Testament given to us by the Gnostic Marcion in 140 C.E. We have today Rome's refutation of Marcion's Gnostic New Testament which they took and altered, added to and changed many things in order to present a "non-Gnostic Christ" when in fact the earliest Christians as well as the Ancients always understood "the Christ" in "allegorical" and not "literal" ways. We will see this fact and the many examples of this forgery as we progress through this website.

The fact that much that is recorded in Christian literature and even in the New Testament can also be found in the writings of "pagans" is problematic for most; that is until you come to the "key" that you need to understand why.

***"Much that is written in Pagan books is found also in the books of God's Church. What they share in common are words which spring from the heart, the law that is inscribed on the heart"... Valentinus, On Friends***

Bet Emet Ministries has devoted considerable time and resources in our other websites revealing the "paganization" of the faith of the Jewish Jesus whereby we show with detailed evidences how the "Jesus myth" of the New Testament is taken from prior pagan religions from all over the world which long predated the Jesus of history. I discovered upon lengthy examination of comparative religion and comparison of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that a synthesis of prior world religions of sorts has been achieved no only in the falsification of the Hebrew when translated into the Greek by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt, in the 3rd century B.C.E., but in the presentation of the Jesus of the New Testament where these forged passages are quoted in presenting Jesus on the pages of our New Testaments.

You have seen, if you looked at these sites, that the same events and religious concepts previously applied to Osiris, Attis, Orpheus, Dionysius, Mithra, and a host of others are also applied to the character of "Jesus" in the New Testament. This was problematic for me during my studies after Seminary when I really began to notice these similarities. Over time I came to see that except for a few Jewish parts here and there sporadically

dispersed throughout the New Testament that I was NOT encountering a Jew in the form of Jesus but a synthesized pagan Godman. I was reading and interpreting an "incarnational Godman" for the Jewish Messiah. After taking several years to study Judaism I was thoroughly convinced that there is no such concept in Judaism for the Jewish Messiah. So I was at a crossroads. I was aware from my studies that I was reading of a Cosmic Godman called Jesus in the New Testament and all the times I now knew that normative conservative Judaism never taught nor expected such. Thus I labeled all of this as just the paganization of the Jewish Jesus and when the many presentations of Jesus on the pages of the New Testament are taken "literally" then that is just what it is. I was not wrong about that and as stated before we are reared in this country to take everything "literally". But when I got around to study in detail Marcion and his First New Testament and Gnosticism (since Marcion was a Gnostic) and along with that began to compare the passages and Scriptures that comprised his First New Testament with the lengthier and much longer Second New Testament of Irenaeus and others over the next centuries I was flabbergasted as what I saw that at one time I could not see since not possessing the knowledge necessary to make sense of this matter. It would take few more years of study until I was able to "key" to this problem. I would eventually get around to studying Gnosticism in detail and then I "awoke" to what was really happening on the pages of our New Testaments where we find really two different presentations of Jesus (a Synoptic Jesus and the Jesus of the Gospel of John and Paul) as well as to why we have two different messages of salvation in one book.

What I found was shocking and disconcerting to say the least but comforting in that it provides the answers that filled in the picture and the many, many unanswered questions that I had accumulated over my years of study. It all boiled down to something so simple yet so profound: interpretation; and by that I mean the tension between "personification and allegory" or "literalism."

**Answer for yourself:** Was "the Christ" in the New Testament originally meant to be interpreted "literally" or "allegorically" by those who first wrote these documents in the First New Testament before Rome would later change it?

It is important to realize that as Christians in the Western Hemisphere we are schooled to interpret everything in a "LITERAL" fashion today and have done so since childhood. This works for most things but when we take a book of religious documents from over 2000 years ago and even earlier and subject it to our "literal" interpretation of everything as we read then we miss the boat because this literature was written by a people who saw God and the things of God quite differently than the way we do today.

- *Eph 3:3 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:9 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (KJV)*
- *Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)*
- *Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

I bet most will read these passages and interpret them due to prior indoctrination from our "literal" perspectives a "Christ" with human flesh. I see no mystery in that at all. But if we take time to ponder what they say then we should be struck at the urgency of what is "now" happening that had never happened before. Now, in that day, was God making known to all people, not just the privileged Priestcrafts of other nations, but to all the knowledge concerning His "Christ." My studies in Gnosticism helped my mind explode when armed with this knowledge I reread the Pauline literature and the Johannine literature in the New Testament. I could no longer read these passages "literally" but was forced by what I learned about Gnosticism, Marcion and his



First Gnostic New Testament, to read and interpret "the Christ" in an "allegorical" manner. What was surprising as my studies over the years advances backwards and finally culminated with an intense study of Egyptian religion that they were the original progenitors of the concept of "the Christ" in the first place and they had always understood and taught "the Christ" in an allegorical manner and never intended that it be taught "literally."

Then it hit me. I had interpreted this ancient concept "incorrectly" and had been reading of this "concept" literally when I should have been interpreting it "allegorically" as it was meant to be.

During my studies into Egypt and Gnosticism I discovered revolutionary free-thinkers who synthesized the available wisdom of the world and articulated perennial truths in dynamic, innovative ways. These earliest Divine Truths were received from God and handed down through history by creative visionaries who encoded their teachings in extraordinary myths in order to capture these Divine Truths for all time. These were explorers of Cosmic Consciousness whose mystical philosophy promised "Gnosis" - experiential Knowledge of Truth. These forgotten spiritual pioneers could not have conceived of the unparalleled impact they would have on the history of humanity. I found this Ancient "religious" tradition was handed down since the beginning of time and culminated in a group of radical individualists who inadvertently created the most authoritarian religion in history.

**Answer for yourself:** Who were they? They called themselves the followers of "the Christ"; we call them Christians.

A terrible thing has occurred to this beautiful and simple wisdom of the Ancients which was articulated as well by the earliest Christians. Rome will take this "allegorical" understanding of many of the Divine Truths given to the ancients by God and distorted, almost beyond recognition, these earliest Divine beliefs into the dogmatic creeds of what they called an "Holy Roman Empire" and "Roman Church" When this impoverished form of Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the brutal Roman Empire, the original Christians, their scriptures, and their "allegorical interpretation" of them will be violently suppressed, their scriptures burned and their memory all but erased. The Roman Church will then fabricate its own account of the origins of Christianity, which is still believed today, and will dismisses the first Christians as a minor cult of obscure heretics. But it was these brilliant mythographers who authored a story which continues to dominate the spiritual imagination of the Western world. From the archaic allegory of a dying and resurrecting Son of God they fashioned a new and vibrant myth which has captured the hearts and minds of millions: the fable of a Jewish peasant who saved the world: the story of Jesus the Christ.

**Answer for yourself:** But did you not say that the "dying and resurrecting" of the Godman is paganism? Yes it is but there is way of looking at this which is "paganism." When we read these accounts "literally" then yes, this is idolatry and paganism at the core. This what the Torah forbids:

*3 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; 6 and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.*

But if we understand and read these accounts of the "dying and resurrecting Son of God" "allegorically" then they express something entirely different; it become only then a "picture" of something happening in the spiritual dimension that is not to be taken "literally" but yet is to be understand as "real" but on a dimension beyond sight and sound...in the Spiritual world.

We will come to see shortly that the First New Testament was a gift from Marcion which presented to the world this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" has had been held by the Ancients since the beginning of time. But as Paul said:

*Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but **NOW** is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)*

No longer for the "initiates" alone; Marcion, like Paul, was making this "mystery" available to all men and women. What hampers us in our understanding of this as Christians is the many, many years we have looked at this New Testament and interpreted everything "literally" and not ever had the enkindling to even question this let alone dare to look at Jesus Christ with "allegorical" eyes as did the Ancients. I understand that this is all new and bewildering most likely to you because it was to me too when I first encountered these ideas in my study. The clincher for me what when I undertook a serious study into Gnosticism and later Egypt and traced these Gnostic concepts of God back to the earliest recorded literature on this planet about God. The roads took me back to Egypt and then looking forward again from the beginning I found these earliest concepts of God and Cosmology all the way down through history in nation after nation. Sure they will become blurred by some and almost unrecognizable by others but there was a "thread" from the beginning of time and creation all the way to Judaism and Christianity. I discovered Gnosticism existed in both Judaism and Christianity since the "truths" about God never change!

I discovered and will present to you these Divine Truths as understood by the original Christians and as expressed in Marcion's First New Testament. First I will do so, God willing, in this website dealing with Marcion and his First New Testament and follow this up hopefully next year with my last planned website on Egypt and is link with the earliest Christians. I am still "blown away" by what I have seen and cannot wait to share it with you.

What I will say now I would ask you to not react or shout or kick anything. Just listen and don't believe anything that I say but just know for now that this website will prove what I am about to say to you to be true. What I will say next does not mean that God does not exist nor that Israel does not have a human Messiah to receive or that there were no Rabbis in the first century reaching out to the non-Jews of the world. The message of God has, as I said, been handed down from Egypt to the world over millennia and the Jewish people we will come to see are "literally" their children and carry this same message in Judaism today; although the light skinned peoples in Israel today are not the same as the "back-skinned" Jews of the first century. But understand their "spiritual message" is the same regardless. What we will discover now, especially when we get somewhat familiar with Gnosticism and alter compare the texts of Marcion's First New Testament with Rome's refutation of it some 40 years later, is that the Jesus story as contained in the First New Testament was a "myth" and an "allegory" used to introduce beginners to their spiritual path toward God. We will come to see that the "Jesus myth" was for those wishing to go deeper than the "Outer Mysteries", which were only "for the masses", there were secret teachings or "Inner Mysteries". The Church Father Hippolytus records this secrecy and "oaths of secrecy" for those being initiated into the Gnosis of the Father (Hippolytus, Refl, 5:24). This also mentioned in the First Letter of Clement as well as the Acts of Peter 3:39. Paul also uses this in I. Cor. 2:9.

*1 Cor 2:9 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

These "Pagan Mysteries" were often refereed to as "unspeakable", not simply because it was forbidden by oath to describe what happened, but more mystically that these things cannot be put into words. The Jews have always said, and I have come to concur, that God is best described as what He is not rather than what He is.

These were "the secret, traditions of true Gnosis" which, according to the "Church Father" Clement of Alexandria, were transmitted "to a small number by a succession of masters" (Clement of Alexandria, Stom., 1:12 and 7.61). Here we have a very important Christian Church Father, long before Rome's domination of Christianity, linking early Christianity and "Gnosis" which is a "buzz" word for Gnosticism.



Those initiated into these Inner Mysteries discovered that Christianity was not just about the dying and resurrecting Son of God as we have been taught today. On the surface you might expect a "literal" dying and resurrection person as we have come to expect by the traditional Roman Catholic New Testament but that was not the case as we will shortly come to see. This terminology was ORIGINALLY understood ONLY ALLEGORICALLY and NEVER referred to a human being as a Son of God! In place of what we as Christians today are taught these earliest Christians were told another myth that few Christians today have even heard of - the story of Jesus' lover, the lost and redeemed Daughter of the Goddess.

Amongst the Ancients, as well as the original Christians the Divine - First Cause of the Cosmos was seen as having both a masculine and feminine face. They related to the Divine Feminine as Sophia, the wise Goddess. This "Sophia" has a bewildering variety of titles and name down through history in Gnostic texts:

- Barbelo,
- Achamoth,
- Mother,
- Wisdom
- Truth,
- Life,
- Justice,
- Holy Spirit,
- Virgin Spirit and
- even the masculine titles like "Lord."

Paul tells us:

*1 Cor 2:6-7 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (KJV)*

Here we find the Gnostic Paul in all his glory speaking of this "Gnosis" and "hidden wisdom" which is "his gospel"; a mystery which only "NOW" is to be shared with all.

One of the others words for "the Sophia" is the word "wisdom" as seen above so let us paraphrase the above verse in a slightly different manner:

*Among the initiates we speak of Sophia, for it is "the secret of Sophia" that is "taught in our Mysteries".*

When initiates of the Inner Mysteries of Christianity partook of Holy Communion, it was Sophia's passion and suffering they remembered (Irenaeus, Adv. Hers., 3.12.7, 1.13.2; E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p.23). Space will not allow for a through discussion here but a short synopsis:

*Briefly, the youngest heavenly being, Sophia, created an offspring, alone without the knowledge of her mate. Being a product of ignorance and passion, Yaldabaoth, his name, also was ignorant and willfully arrogant. He went forth and created on his own, angels and demons and all sorts of creatures. He falsely declared himself god out of ignorance. Yaldabaoth was very jealous of mankind due to their superiority to him and their ultimate divinity, therefore Yaldabaoth enslaved them to keep them from moral knowledge and eternal life. The true God/father creator above, finally learning of what was happening sent forth male and female saviors, Sophia and Christ to instruct humanity in the true god and humanities own divine nature. In the end, all of humanity was destined to*

salvation. At death they will leave the prison of their bodies and return to the divine rule of the transcendent God, their true father.

Before you jump to conclusions and say the above "myth" is not truthful I recommend that you remember the problem of "evil" in the world as emanating from a Good God as we believe. The ancients no less than us struggled with this for millennia and devised "myths" in their efforts trying to explain the existence of evil in the Cosmos and its origin. Their benevolent efforts were intended to protect the First Cause, God, and not lay the blame for evil and death at His feet. The Rabbis did the same things as they struggled with the existence of "evil" from a Perfect God. That is the reason why

*2 Sam 24:1 1 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he (God) moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. (KJV)*

*1 Chr 21:1 1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. (KJV)*

The Rabbis in 1 Chron. 21:1 did exactly what the Gnostics had done; namely lay the blame for evil and suffering at the feet of another other than a Perfect God by changing the text in 1 Chron. 21:1. This is a real problem for the Ancients and Priests of Egypt as well in trying to explain the order, law, and Divine design of the Cosmos which contains within all its beauty "evil" as it is for any theologians whether they be Jewish or Christian. These Christian Gnostics decided not to lay the blame for such evil at the feet of God but rather on an emanation from Him...the Sophia (an intermediary between Spirit and matter [world]). This is a "myth" necessitated in order to explain the unexplainable. Such is the role of "myth" in religion. Myths convey Divine truths that are real but the characters within them are not intended to be taken literally as if humans.

Amongst the original Christians, priests and priestesses would offer initiates wine as a symbol of "her blood". In secret celebrations of the mass, Marcus the Gnostic, taught that the wine symbolized the blood of the Mother (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, 1979, p.73). The prayers would be offered: "May Sophia fill your inner being and increase in you her Gnosis" (Irenaeus, op. cit., 1.13.2). It was Sophia who was petitioned: Come, hidden Mother; come, you who are made manifest in your works, and give joy and rest to those who are bound to you. Come and partake in this Eucharist which we perform in your name, and in the love feast for which we have assembled at your invitation" (*The Acts of Thomas*, 50; K. Rudolph, The Nature and History of Gnosticism, Harper and Row, 1987, p. 241).

Original baptism as practiced by the earliest Christians was also performed in the name of the Goddess of Wisdom [Sophia]. K. Rudolph in his The Nature and History of Gnosticism gives two baptismal formulae used by the Gnostics (K. Rudolph, The Nature and History of Gnosticism, Harper and Row, 1987, p. 243).

**Answer for yourself:** How come we don't know of any of this today? Well you have to ask Rome and why they destroyed the First New Testament of Marcion and substituted another and in so doing they destroyed all of this "allegorical" understanding of God and His Divine concepts. You would have to ask Rome why they burned all of this "allegorical" literature along with millions of people who would not accept their "counterfeit" religion of the second through the fifth century.

The eradication of this feminine understanding of God by the patriarchal Roman Church as taught through the myth of the Christian Goddess has left us all ignorant of the earliest Christians of antiquity. In so doing spirituality has become part of the battleground which separates the sexes where the patriarchal face of religion (masculine) dominates the matriarchal face of religion (feminine) when it should be the shelter of eternal union of both concepts which best accurately describe the Creator. The original Christians, however, practised "partnership spirituality" unlike today. They understood God correctly and therefore valued men and women equally, as expressions of the myth of both God and Goddess. They saw the division of the sexes as a correlate of that primal duality which is the source of creation, a duality that when made one, as in the act of love, brings the bliss of union that they called "Gnosis."



For the original Christians used the venue of "allegory" and "myth" to describe the unexplainable and the invisible. They expressed these religious concepts of the Ancients from Egypt downward, Eternal Truths, not literally but through metaphor and allegory and explained them and "the Christ" of God in symbolic terminology. **The Jesus story of the First New Testament, and not the Second New Testament, appears at the end of a cycle of Christian myths which begins with the ineffable Mystery manifesting itself as a primordial Father and Mother and culminates in the mystical marriage of Jesus and Sophia.** The Inner Mysteries reveal these myths as allegories of spiritual initiation, symbolic stories which encode a profound philosophy with the power to transform an initiate from a Christian into a Christ among many. G.R.S. Mead writes: "But when we find that the Gnostics treated the Gospel-legends also not as history, but as allegory, and not only as allegory, but as symbolic of the drama of initiation, the matter becomes of deep interest for the theological student" (G.R.S. Mead, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten, The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1907, p. 370).

For the original Christians the 'gospel' or "good news" is not a story written in a book. It is not a story to be understood "literally." Of course I refer to the First New Testament and not the refutation of it by Rome in their Second New Testament. Such a statement will become clearer as our studies increase. **Rather the early Gnostic Christians taught that: "The gospel *IS* the Gnosis (the knowledge of our true selves)"** The good news is that a complete transformation of our consciousness and perspective of all of life is possible. Evolutionary forces alone are insufficient, however, to bring about spiritual freedom.

These earliest Christian Gnostics truly understood enlightenment and the state of Cosmic Consciousness, the ultimate awareness called variously - enlightenment, nirvana, satori, samadhi, self-realization, rapture, salvation, ascension, unity consciousness, voidness; known by many other terms by many various religions. They understood this as the goal of life, the ultimate destination of every individualized being. It is brought about when the individual personality ascends beyond the illusionary perception of self separateness (fleshly senses and fleshy existence) to merge in the Universal Self from which it originated so very long ago. Spiritual evolution towards this goal takes place over ages but the final ascent of Spirit can happen in an instant of time.

Gnostics understood that humans are caught in a predicament consisting of physical existence in a body of suffering and pain (**the descent of the soul into matter**..the passion of the Sophia) combined with ignorance of their true origins, their essential nature and their ultimate destiny (that we are Divine sparks of God from which we have come and will return). To be liberated from this predicament, human beings require help, although they must also contribute their own efforts.

Christian Gnostics treated the path from the normal human condition to the goal of enlightenment. The easiest way to achieve this Ultimate Goal was to follow in the footsteps of those who have passed this way already. The sages, saints and ascended masters of all times have found this path - sometimes through their own unaided efforts but more often by following the written or spoken guidance of a previous Teacher. From earliest times Messengers of Light (avatars) have come forth from the True God in order to assist humans in their quest for Gnosis and the knowledge of their true self. Only a few of these salvific figures are mentioned in Gnostic scripture; some of the most important are Seth (the third son of Adam) and Jesus. **The majority of Gnostics always looked to Jesus "Christ" as the principal savior figure (the Soto).**

Gnostics do not look to salvation from sin (original or other), but rather from the ignorance of which sin is a consequence. **Ignorance - whereby is meant ignorance of spiritual realities - is dispelled only by Gnosis, and the decisive revelation of Gnosis is brought by the Messengers of Light, especially by Christ, the Logos of the True God. It is not by His suffering and death but by His life of teaching and His establishing of mysteries that Christ performed His work of salvation.** The Gnostic concept of salvation, like other Gnostic concepts, is a subtle one. On the other hand, Gnostic salvation may easily be mistaken for an unmediated individual experience, a sort of spiritual do-it-yourself project. Gnostics hold that the potential for Gnosis, and thus, of salvation is not vicarious but individual. At the same time, they also acknowledge that Gnosis and salvation can be, indeed must be, stimulated and facilitated in order to effectively arise with consciousness. This stimulation is supplied by Messengers of Light who, in addition to their teachings,



establish salvific mysteries (sacraments) which can be administered by apostles of Messengers and their successors. One needs also remember that knowledge of our true nature - as well as other associated realizations - are withheld from us by our very condition of earthly existence. The True God of transcendence is unknown in this world; in fact He is often called the Unknown father. It is thus obvious that revelation from on high is needed to bring about salvation. The indwelling spark must be awakened from its terrestrial slumber by the saving knowledge that comes "from without". This gospel holds out the extraordinary promise that those who understand it "will not taste death". But immortality is not access to Heaven as reward for living an upright life. It is the immediate realization, here and now, of our true identity, which was never born and so can never die. That we are all parts of God's Cosmic Consciousness within mortal bodies and that we live, and breath, and find our being in Him and to Him we return when we pass this plane of existences. The

**Answer for yourself:** How come we have never heard this before?

**Answer for yourself:** Why isn't the gospel of Gnosis common knowledge?

First, because the Roman Church has spent over 16 centuries systematically destroying the evidence that it ever existed. For much of this time, merely to possess Christian works unacceptable to the established Church was punishable by a cruel death. Thankfully some of these texts have nevertheless survived. In recent decades they have been augmented by fabulous archaeological finds such as the discovery of a library of "heretical" Christian scriptures in a cave near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. The implications of this find, and the advances in our understanding of early Christianity that it has led to, have yet to be widely appreciated.

Inadequate translation has also played a significant role in disguising the secret teachings of Christianity encoded in the New Testament gospels and alluded to frequently by Paul in his letters. Rendering these works into familiar "churchy" English lulls us into the reassuring illusion that we have understood what is being said, when in fact we have not even begun to scratch the surface of the real significance of the original Greek. The "heretical" Christian gospels, on the other hand, are regularly rendered into unfamiliar English, making them sound strange and inaccessible. One translator was even in the habit of remarking that such texts were "not supposed to make any sense" Little wonder, then, that an artificial division has been created between the orthodox canon and other Christian gospels. However, when the New Testament Jesus story is understood in its original context, as part of the whole Christian myth cycle, and the "heretical" gospels are interpreted sympathetically, they can, at last, be seen as expressions of one profound mystical philosophy.

It is time that we awoke from our slumber as Christians as to the truthful origin of our faith and forgery of our Christian Bibles today by the power of Rome. Our spiritual ancestors were no ignorant and mistaken as we perceived; it is we who have a "beam in our eyes." Although they lived in very different physical conditions, they still faced the same great enigmas of existence as we do today and that their answers are potentially as valuable as or contemporary views if not more so since it is they who gave us these spiritual concepts that we sadly "reinterpret" today and thereby lose the intended Ancient meanings.

In closing let me say that at first some or many of these ideas that we have encountered and will continue to encounter, although seemingly complex, you will find in time as we study that these teachings are in essence astonishingly simple once you begin to see them "allegorically" stand for invisible Divine concepts. It is the preconditioning we have for interpreting everything "literally" first that makes our journey into truth harder than it has to be. It is my hope in presenting these articles that we can recapture or present a "kodak moment" of the earliest Christians and their religious beliefs of "the Christ" and salvation and compare them with ours today and in so doing ask "why they changed" and then go to the texts to see these changes ourselves as we compare Marcion's First New Testament with the Second New Testament. In so doing we will discover for ourselves the startling reality that the salvation message above was the true Gospel of "the Christ" before it was destroyed and recrafted by Rome in the second through the fifth century and presented



**to the world in their Second New Testament.** The only thing left to do after that is repent and return back to the faith "once given" to the saints..and you might be surprised to find that this "faith once given" began thousands of years before Israel....all the way back in Heliopolis, Memphis, Hermopolis, and Thebes, Egypt; when God revealed Himself to man for the first time. **The saddest story in this world is the loss of this knowledge concerning the Creator but we are so fortunate in that in our day, due to the untiresome efforts of unbiased archeologists, we are recovering the earliest and truest understanding of God first given to mankind on this planet. It is to this reconstruction of the earliest understanding of God among mankind that we now turn in earnest. Baruch HaShem!**

It takes substantial evidence to validate such a shocking revision of received history. This I will provide in this website for interested students. It is my intention to present the facts concerning how Christianity and Christian mythology developed and we do this best by not listening to the "winners" of history and religion (Rome). It is Rome let me remind you that branded heretics everything it did not like or accept and did everything in its power, including murder, to silence the opposition. The traditional history was written by the winners as it always is, but upon serious study of the available evidences available to us, you will come to see, as I have, that the account of the origins and beliefs of early Christianity give to us by those branded "heretics" by Rome is far closer to the truth than what we have inherited through the Church at Rome.



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# THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS...WHO WERE THEY?

## #1

**Answer for yourself:** Is the traditional history of Christianity inaccurate to the facts and evidence that can be found today and at worst a bunch of lies handed down by Rome on purpose in order to cover up the real truth concerning the religion and beliefs of the earliest Christians? What a question to start this article but one which goes to the heart of what we will uncover as your studies progress into the faith of the earliest Christians. Over the years as my studies became more involved and considerable more in-depth the evidence and facts that I was uncovering demanded that I think the unthinkable. Christianity was not the cult of a first-century Messiah, but a mixture of Gnosticism, Mystery Religions, and Judaism. I had uncovered a unique and elaborate synthesis of Gnosticism, Mystery Religions and Judaism which culminated in a new religious movement entitled Christianity.

I had begun my research into the true origins of my faith following Seminary for it was there I knew I had a lot of questions either without answers or with very difficult ones that brought the integrity of my Christian faith into question. I will just go ahead and give you a fact but I will not interpret it for you for you will have to sift through the evidence and the lack of evidence in determining the answer for yourself but outside this one book, the Roman New Testament, I could find no "explicit" evidence that there had ever been an historical Jesus. Now there had been an Israel, a Moses, Prophets, Covenants, and even a Covenant for the Gentiles entitled the Covenant of Noah. There had been a David, a Solomon, and others but very problematic for me was that with all the prolific writing of both Jews and non-Jews in the tumultuous and very problematic first century just before and right after the Roman war with Rome there could be found not one "explicit" and "credible" reference to the Jesus of the New Testament! Not one! Of course as we have seen in previous articles the early Gentile Christians were prolific forgers of religious documents and often one will say that "Josephus wrote two sentences about Jesus."

**Answer for yourself:** When Josephus wrote volumes of very negative writings about these Jewish false messiahs which he felt brought the destruction of Israel how do we account that he mentions in only two short sentences in all of his prolific writings (Antiquities and The Jewish War) does he have only two lines of text? Well scholars who have no church to build or no offering to collect that these references to Jesus in Josephus are but later Christian forgeries in order to deflect such accusations made by others to this same problematic issue; namely, where are any Jesus references outside the New Testament that are explicit as to his existence as we find in the New Testament?

Unbiased scholars today, when considering all the evidence that exists to us today due to the efforts of increased archeology, the gospel story as it exists today in the New Testament is a Jewish reworking of ancient Pagan myths of a dying and resurrecting Son of God. It is a little too early for this but I want to give you a hint.

**Answer for yourself:** Did the earliest Christians interpret this "dying and resurrecting" Son of God "literally" or "allegorically"? We will see that they understood this as a myth to be interpreted "allegorically" and it would only be with later theologians like Ignatius and Irenaeus and others what a "literal" understanding of the "dying/rising" Son of God - Christ be interpreted "literally." Of course with this will come a host of new religious writings promoting such beliefs and we have them today in Rome's Second New Testament.



**Answer for yourself:** How come I have never heard that the "Jesus Myth" of the New Testament is not true to the historical record?

Well the usual reason is lack of study. This is not a new understanding of the Jesus of the New Testament. Many books and essays, by my count, over one hundred or more in the past two hundred years have fervently denied the very existence of Jesus. On many of our websites I chronicle and detail that the Jesus story in the New Testament is little more than a solar myth derived from former personifications of the Sun taken from various nations since the beginning of time. It is basically sun worship when interpreted "literally" as it most often done. But if we look at the story as the earliest Christians understood it which was "allegorically" then it is no longer idolatry and sun worship but a vehicle - myth that relays to mankind Ancient Divine truths concerning God and His Cosmos. [set down and think on what I just said and never forget it]!

This understanding of the "Jesus Myth" in the New Testament, that it is not accurate to the historical record, is not new by any means. As my studies in Seminary and afterwards progressed I ran across these "theories." But at the time I lacked a profound understanding of Gnosticism as well as competent knowledge of the earliest New Testament manuscripts that comprised Marcion's First New Testament as well as the later Second New Testament which will rewrite "the Christ" as it was first recorded and believed by the earliest Jewish and Gentile Gnostic Christians. You may be shocked to know that over one hundred books over the last two hundred years have been written on the lack of a historical Jesus. In the late 1790s C.F. Volney argues that Jesus was a solar myth derived from Krishna. He understood the New Testament's depiction of the "Jesus Christ" as the personification of the path of the Sun, Stars, and Constellations in the Heavens which all Gentile sun worshipping nations understood and held in common, but under different names of course. But understand these sun worshipping nations all saw the same things in the Heavens and reasoned similarly. Only the names were different owing to different cultures and different languages. Thus the common theme in their Astro-theology parallels the Jesus story of the New Testament in many, many places. C.F. Dupis traced this myth back to Egypt in his Origine De Tous Les Cultes, Ou La Religion Universelle (1795-1812). Before we label all of Egypt as idolatrous we need to take pause to understand that Egypt expressed the earliest Divine Concepts of God on this planet and did so through the medium of "allegory." They gave the world the religious concepts that we yet struggle with today; especially in light that we try to interpret them "literally" instead of "allegorically" as Egypt had done for thousands and thousands of years. When later nations would take these religious concepts and interpret them "literally", instead of retaining their "allegorical" understandings, as Rome would later, then we move from pure worship of the First Cause of the Cosmos, Whom we call God, into gross idolatry. This is the problem with the Roman Second New Testament for it takes Marcion's First New Testament (which interpreted "the Christ" allegorically) and adds, deletes, alters, and completely reinterprets "the Christ"; changing the prior "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" into a "literal" presentation of "the Christ" as a fleshly human being named Jesus. Rome, familiar with the Joshua story, takes the concept of "Joshua/Jesus/Yah's Salvation-via the Christ/Logos" and literally makes is a fleshly person instead of understanding it as pure "allegory" as had the Ancients and the earliest Christians. You will see this in time as our studies progress. This explains many of the later additions to the Second New Testament that are not present in the earlier First New Testament of Marcion in 140 C.E. The earliest Christians understood "Christ Jesus" as a "metaphor" - "allegory" and never interpreted it as a literal person. But Rome will change all of this and persecute and destroy all of this "allegorical Christology" that they can get their hands upon in order to keep this "belief" from continuing.

**Answer for yourself:** Could this explain why there is no explicit reference of a historical Jesus outside of Rome's New Testament other than what scholars today tell us are but Christian forgeries of select documents whereby the "historical Jesus" is written in later by overzealous Christian scribes in order to counter such charges made by others in their day and time? Well...lets not answer this yet until we see all the evidence we can muster concerning this problem.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE JESUS MYTH

Scholars tell us that this "Jesus Myth" was authored by a sect of mystical Jews called the **Therapeutae**. We know them more commonly by another name which most are more familiar; namely the **Essenes**.

As a former pastor when encountering this kind of information I had to know the truth and spared no expense, whether money or time, to track down the answers to these problematic questions.

**The traditional history of Christianity has managed to survive for so long, in part, because although it is utterly inadequate to the facts, it is fairly internally consistent and easy to grasp.** Over the years I have found that the best way to open people to the idea that this supposed history or the "origin" of Christianity is actually a complete fantasy is to present a rival picture of how Christianity and Christian mythology developed, which is more coherent and plausible.

We have heard and read the Roman version of the history of Christianity for our whole lives. Fundamentally all I am suggesting we do is for a change listen to those who lost the civil war with Rome and what they had to say about their "Christian" faith before it would be changed beyond recognition in the third through the fifth centuries. It will be at that time that the Roman Church will brand any with diverse religious beliefs as "heretics" and will do everything in its power to silence them; **from killing them to burning all their libraries and books.** **The traditional history was written by the winners, but upon years of study and with the aid of archeology today I have come to believe that the account of the origins and meaning of Christianity given by those dissident Christians is far closer to the truth.**





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# THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS...WHO WERE THEY

## #2

If we ever hope to get to the truth concerning the earliest Christians and what they believed about Jesus and "the Christ" then we have to begin literally at the beginning. We have to begin such serious study where their religious beliefs originated and that would be Egypt. As you will come to see the traditional picture of Jesus is far different from what our studies will reveal to us but that should be expected having seen by now how Rome systematically tried to purge the world of these early "Christians" and their religious literature. Thanks to diligent efforts by many the fruits of archeology today are bringing these truths to the surface as the "rocks cry out."

## THE HELLENIZATION OF JUDAISM

The traditional picture of Jesus has him growing up among shepherds and fishermen in a rural backwater of the ancient world. **Actually by the time that Jesus is supposed to have lived, Judea, like so many other countries of the time, had adopted much of Greek culture and become "Hellenized."** In *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, Martin Hengel, Professor of Early Judaism at Tubingen University, presents an astonishing picture of the full extent of Hellenization in Judea in the first two centuries B.C.E.

An hour's walk from Nazareth in Galilee, where Jesus is supposed to have grown up, was the Hellenized city of Sepphoris, which contained a theater with a beautiful mosaic of Dionysus. Gadara, a day's walk from Nazareth, contained an important school of Pagan philosophy. **Scythopolis, on the southern border of Galilee, was a center for the Mysteries of Dionysus and was even said to have been founded by the godman himself.**

V.D. Macchioro, in his *From Orpheus to Paul*, 1930, on pages 188 and following informs us that **Judea was surrounded by Dionysiac religion.** Phoenician coins of Sidon, Berytus, and Orthosia show a divine figure like the Phoenician god Esmum represented as Dionysus. The Nabataeans, whose dominion stretched from Arabia to Damascus, worshiped a god named Dusares who seems to have been the Orphic Dionysus. In the age of Jesus, Asia Minor was filled with Orphic brotherhoods named *speirai*. **Tarsus, the home of Paul I might add, was very well acquainted with Orphic myths and creeds, and worshiped Sandan, a dying and resurrected god who bore some resemblance to the Orphic Dionysus.**

**Answer for yourself:** Could this fact have any impact upon the Pauline concept of the dying/rising Godman which we see in his writings but which is absent from normative Judaism? I think that very strange for a supposed "Pharisee of Pharisees."

I. Campbell, in his *Occidental Mythology* tells us on page 274 that Judea was surrounded, in the last century before Christ, by a Dionysiac and Orphic girdle. Excavations of early Palestinian graves have produced numerous talismans bearing Jewish names along with figures of the gods of Egypt, Syria, and Babylon.

Jerusalem was surrounded by thoroughly Hellenized cities, such as Larissa and Ascalon, which produced a stream of eminent Pagan philosophers whose renown spread as far as Rome. **A Jewish scripture called 2 Maccabees records that the Temple of Jerusalem itself was transformed into a Greek temple to Zeus and festivals of Dionysus were celebrated.** The high priest Jason built a Greek-style *gymnasium* - a Pagan "university" for physical, intellectual, and spiritual education-alongside the Temple which clearly appealed to Jewish clergy more than their traditional ways. According to 2 Maccabees:

*The priests no longer showed any enthusiasm for their duties at the altar, they treated the Temple with disdain, they neglected the sacrifices, and whenever the opening gong called them they hurried to join in the sports at the wrestling school in defiance of the Law (2 Maccabees 4:7).*

**This process of integration between Jewish and Pagan culture had been going on for centuries.** The history of the ancient Jews is one of repeated conquest by other nations:

- in 922 BCE by the Egyptians;
- in 700 BCE by the Assyrians;
- in 586 BCE by the Babylonians;
- in 332 BCE by the Greeks under Alexander the Great;
- in 198 BCE by the Syrians; and finally
- in 63 BCE by the Romans, who completely destroyed the state of Judea in 112 CE.

These conquests inevitably led to the Jewish people coming under the cultural influence of their conquerors as well as Jews becoming dispersed throughout the Mediterranean as slaves, forming the so-called "Diaspora." Those who regained their freedom became integrated with Pagan civilization and even when they had the chance to return from exile to their homeland, the majority chose not to.

**As you might expect Jews of the Diaspora integrated Pagan spirituality with their own religious traditions.** In Babylon, for example, Jews became famous for their practice of Babylonian astrology. The great patriarch Abraham himself was a Babylonian Jew who was said to have been well-versed in astrological doctrines.' Indeed, eminent Jews such as the historian Josephus and the philosophers Aristobulus and Philo make the outrageous claim that Abraham invented astrology.

**Jews even adopted the Pagan Mysteries. In Babylon they practiced the Mysteries of Tammuz, the Babylonian Osiris-Dionysus. By the New Kingdom period, c. 1550 B.C.E., the Babylonian Tammuz had syncretized in Phoenicia with the Osiris cult to produce Adonis. In the Old Testament it is repeatedly related how the Phoenicians (the Canaanites) seduced the Jews away from their proper worship of Jehovah.**

In the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel describes Jewish women ritually mourning the death of Tammuz at the north gate of the Jerusalem Temple itself.

*Ezekiel 8.14: "Next he brought me to the entrance of the north-gate of the House of the Lord; and there sat the women bewailing Tammuz."*

One emendation of this text reveals that at the north gate there was in fact an altar to Tammuz (P. Jaroslav, The Tanakh, The Jewish Publication Company, 1985, p. 902). The Old Testament is full of references to Israel defecting to the Pagan cults of her neighbors: Num. 25.3.5 (in which the Lord tells Moses to have the ringleaders of the cult publicly crucified); Deut. 23.18; I Kings 15.12; Psalms 28, 105, 106; Jer. 16.5; Hos. 4.14; Amos 7.9; Wisdom 12.3, 14.5. Portrayed as an offense to Jehovah, these defections were more likely an offense to the Jerusalem authorities-the destruction of the cults of the "High Places" was part of the attempt to install a centralized cult in Jerusalem, for obvious political and taxation reasons.



According to St. Jerome, there was a shaded grove sacred to Adonis, the Syrian Osiris-Dionysus, in Bethlehem (J. Frazer, The Golden Bough, 1922, p. 346). In Syria striking Pagan Mystery symbols have been found painted alongside traditional Jewish motifs on the walls of the synagogue. L.H. Martin in his The Hellenistic Religions, 1987, on page 110 informs us that **the striking appearance of Dionysian-Orphic symbols in the third century CE wall paintings of the Dura-Europas synagogue in eastern Syria confirms that Philo's references to Bacchic symbols and images in a Jewish context (the Therapeutae) were NOT anomalies of some Egyptian - Jewish fringe group. Indeed, the Jewish god was identified by some with Sabazius, an ancient Thraco-Phrygian deity who most often was identified with Dionysus.**

In Asia Minor Jews equated their god Jehovah with Sabazius, the Phrygian Osiris-Dionysus (G.A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist, 1975, p. 194). J. Campbell, Occidental Mythology, 1964, p. 273, informs us that in Asia Minor the cult of Sabazius merged with the Syrian Jewish cult of Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts. We are even told that Jews were expelled from Rome in 139 BCE for trying to introduce the Mysteries of Sabazius into the city (Turcan, R. (1992), p. 316)! Valerius Maximus, Memorable Words and Deeds, 1.3.3, tells us that they were expelled along with Chaldaean astrologers.

**The god of the Jews became known as "Iao," which is an ancient Mystery name of Dionysus** (G.R.S. Mead, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten, Theosophical Pub. Society, 2nd. edition, 1906, p. 534).

A coin has been found at an archaeological site less than 40 miles from Jerusalem that depicts Jehovah as the founder of the Mysteries of Eleusis (V.D. Macchioro, From Orpheus to Paul, 1930, p.189). Indeed, it is a shocking fact that many ancient authors, including Plutarch, Diodorus, Cornelius Labo, Johannes Lydus, and Tacitus, repeatedly identify the god of the Jews with Dionysus (M. Hengel, Jews, Greeks, Barbarians, (1980), p. 102; R. Lane-Fox, Pagans and Christians, 1986, p. 487, also records the widely held opinion that the Jews were worshipers of Dionysus under another name.

One modern scholar comments:

***Of all the ancient gods, Dionysus was most persistently associated with the Jewish god in Jerusalem!***  
(Hengel, op. cit., 71).

**The view of Jews as united in their opposition to Paganism is an illusion fostered by Christianity to act as the foundation for its own later claims to be spiritually distinct from Paganism.** The truth is that different Jews adopted different positions toward Pagan culture. Some were traditional fundamentalists. Others enthusiastically adopted Pagan ways. **Many sought to synthesize their own traditions with Paganism and have the best of both worlds.**

From these references alone you should not be shocked to find the synthesis of a Dionysus based religion with Judaism. If you are not familiar with Dionysus we have provided on other websites pertinent information but what follows is a short summary again revealing this unique religious synthesis with Judaism and later Christianity.

## DIONYSUS

An inscription in the Vatican states plainly, ***"He who will not eat of my body, nor drink of my blood so that he may be one with me and I with him, shall not be saved."*** This is not terribly surprising, unless you consider that this is inscribed on the remains of the temple the Vatican was built on- one dedicated to the **God Mithras**. Such eerie parallels between the pronouncements of Jesus and Mithras are not the only

similarities between the two religions. Mithras was known to his followers as "The light of the world," or "The good shepherd," and exhorted his followers to share ritual communion. He was reputedly born in a cave, with shepherds in attendance, on the twenty-fifth of December.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just coincidence?

Let us examine some more facts for just a second. Several other Gods share the December birthday - they are also solar deities, who are born in the winter solstices of virgin mothers, die, and are reborn. One of these, Attis, is known to his followers as "The lamb of God," and his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection were celebrated annually, with ritual communions of bread and wine. His virgin mother, Cybele, was worshipped as "The queen of heaven."

Thousands of years before Jesus, there was a passion story told about a God man, born of a virgin mother, in a stable. He travels about with his followers, preaching and performing miracles, until one day he allows himself to be arrested and tried for blasphemy. He is found guilty and executed, only to rise from the grave three days later, where the women weeping at his tomb do not recognize him - that is, until he assumes his divine form as the God Dionysus.

Common to all of these 'mystery' religions (so called because one was required to be initiated or baptized into the faith to learn its doctrines), including early Christianity, are themes of rebirth, redemption, and the transmission of life-changing information. So many religions in those times shared similar themes with that usually the deities became melded together. Early depictions of Jesus show him holding the Lyre of Orpheus, or driving Apollo's chariot. A talisman bearing the crucified likeness of Osiris-Dionysus is inscribed Orpheus/Bacchus. It is impossible to tell just by looking at old artwork which haloed infant gods are cuddled in the arms of which mothers. The Emperor Constantine, who legitimized Christianity in Rome, was a worshipper of Sol Invictus - an amalgamation of solar deities Mithras, Helios, and Apollo - and he recognized Jesus' place in that company almost immediately.

Of course, later Christians were terribly perturbed by these similarities - these coincidences so disturbed one early Christian church father, Justin Martyr, that he accused the devil of sending an imitator of Christ in advance. Had he paid a little more attention to the past, he might have noted that the association of Jesus with Dionysus is not so strange - philosophers had been making connections between Jehovah and Dionysus for centuries. New Testament authors stuck sly references to Pagan gods throughout the gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Did early Christians, like their modern descendants, believe that theirs was the one and only true manifestation of religion?

**Answer for yourself:** Where did this synthesis of Dionysus and Jehovah begin?

## METROPOLITAN ALEXANDRIA

The greatest integration of Jewish and Pagan cultures occurred in Alexandria in Egypt. When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt at the end of the fourth century BCE, the Jews helped him by acting as spies and mercenaries. They were rewarded by being allowed to inhabit their own quarter of the new city of Alexandria, which Alexander founded. This initiated a mass voluntary migration of Jews into the city, where they enjoyed all the benefits of sophisticated Pagan culture. It is thought that up to half of the original population of Alexandria were Jews.

From the very start Alexandria was a *cosmo-polis* - a "universal city." Alexander had created a vast empire within which Greek became the common language and people from every race journeyed to Alexandria to become citizens of this new multi-racial city. Ptolemy I, the first ruler of Alexandria, decided to create a small Greece in Egypt (Mead, op. cit., 102). Ptolemy I brought the philosopher Demetrius Phalerion from Athens to



establish the library and museum and Timotheus, a priest of Eleusis, to establish the Mysteries. Under his enlightened rulership a library and museum were founded, which systematically collected together the knowledge of the ancient world. At its height, the library housed hundreds of thousands of scrolls-some say perhaps more than half a million scrolls and papyri. During the invasion by Julius Caesar the library caught fire. The damage was later made good by Mark Anthony, who donated 200,000 scrolls from the libraries of Asia Minor and Greece. Alexandria became the greatest center of learning in the ancient world, replacing even Athens.

In Alexandria, a city where half of its population were Jews, the Mysteries of Osiris-Dionysus reached new heights. The mystical pageant of Eleusis was developed into an even grander dramatic spectacle, performed in many acts on multi-level stages.~ Unlike in Athens, the Mysteries practiced in Alexandria were not even protected by a rule of secrecy, so anyone could attend these great mystical rites. Hence the knowledge of them displayed by many Christian fathers (C. Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 1967, p. 118). Such a cosmopolitan and tolerant environment naturally encouraged the merging and combining of different spiritual traditions (S. Angus, *Mystery Religions*, Dover, 1925, p. 19-20): *"Religious syncretism, on a stupendous scale, was an immediate outcome of Alexander's intermingling of races. Every Mystery Religion was syncretistic. Religious syncretism was aided by the almost complete absence of intolerance, by the universal demand for Savior-gods, by the medium of a common tongue, and by that mixture of races such as could be found today only in the United States. This syncretistic tendency increased in intensity under the Roman Empire. It prepared the way for the long sway of Oriental cults over the West and for the success of Christianity itself."*

The Jewish population could not help but come under the spell of the sophisticated Pagan culture they encountered in Alexandria. The religious taboos of traditional Jews prevented them attending public banquets, festivals, and the theater, because of their associations with Paganism. This also led to anti-Semitism among the Greeks, who regarded such exclusivity as offensive. Anti-Semitism began in the third century BCE but had become endemic by the Roman period. This cut them off from the immense advantages of being a part of the great civilization that surrounded them. Not surprisingly, therefore, large numbers of Jews chose to break with their traditions and attempted to integrate themselves into Pagan society. In a remarkably short period, Jews abandoned their own tongue and adopted the universal Greek language. Referring to the few Jewish inscriptions in Aramaic or Hebrew in Egypt, compared with hundreds in Greek, Hengel writes, "It is amazing how quickly the Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt gave up their familiar Aramaic and adopted Greek." The Septuagint Bible is evidence of this fundamental shift. Only the names on tombstones from the late Ptolemaic and early Roman period in Alexandria reveal that their owners were Jews. Otherwise they speak of completely Pagan concepts of the afterlife, death-bringing Moira, Hades with its everlasting darkness, and the gloomy descent to Lethe (M. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, Barbarians*, 1980, p. 101). Aramaic and Hebrew continued to be spoken, because of constant immigration of Jews from Judea into Egypt, but Greek became the dominant language, not only in dealings with other national groups in the city, but within the Jewish community itself. It was even used in the services of the synagogue and in family worship. S. Angus, *Mystery Religions*, 1925, p. 30, states: "The Jews of the Diaspora read Greek literature, spoke Greek, used Greek in the services of the synagogue and in family worship, while the inquisitive Greeks were not averse to studying a new cult. Hengel states that the synagogues of the Diaspora were very different from anything in Jerusalem. Known as *proseuchai*, they celebrated no rituals or sacrifice but were entirely made up of prayers and readings from the Septuagint. They could be, and sometimes were, mistaken for the meeting houses of philosophers (M. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, Barbarians*, 1980, p. 98). These two spiritual forces, the religion of Israel and the thought of Greece, confronted each other in Alexandria, the capital of the Western Diaspora and of Hellenism."

The Jewish intelligentsia wanted to reconcile their ancestral faith with the wisdom of other peoples. They questioned the fundamentalist view of their scriptures as literal history and began to interpret them as mystical allegories. Using this technique borrowed from the Pagan sages, Jewish philosophers were able to



interpret their scriptures in line with Greek thought. The allegorical interpretation of Homer, Hesiod, and the myths of gods and goddesses was a feature of the Hellenistic scholarly tradition. Beginning with Aristobulus, c. 150 B.C.E., the Jews also began to allegorize their sacred texts. This technique was then used by all his successors, especially Philo. Philo's work was in turn taken over by Clement and Origen and became indispensable to early Christianity, which found its prophecies of Jesus by an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. Under their influence Jewish philosophy blossomed and the Alexandrian rabbis, becoming known as the "Light of Israel," were highly esteemed by Jews everywhere. The Septuagint provides the best evidence of this. By translating the obscure name of God in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14), as "I am that I am," the translators of the Septuagint, in the words of Bickerman, "Platonized the Lord himself." At the same time numerous other changes were by these thoroughly Hellenized Jews in Egypt in order to bring the work into line with Greek thought. Prior Greek religious concepts, such as Dionysus, are integrated into the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures thereby obscuring the truth concerning the truthful Jewish Messiah as taught by Moses and the Prophets!

Jewish fundamentalists saw their god Jehovah as a tribal deity who had helped them throughout their history to achieve victory over their oppressors and who was in complete opposition to Paganism. The Hellenized Jews of Alexandria, however, portrayed Jehovah as a universal God, identical with Plato's vision of the supreme Oneness (Josephus, The Life and Contra Apion, p. 359). By the first century CE such identification was a commonplace of Jewish apologetic. Josephus writes of Moses' teachings about Jehovah, "He represented Him as One, uncreated and immutable to all eternity, in beauty surpassing all mortal thought." It is hard to reconcile this Platonic God with the jealous, partisan, and cruel Jehovah of the Old Testament, but as the Septuagint was now presented as a gigantic allegory, its violence was thereby neutralized. Josephus also repeats the opinion, which by now had become formulaic among Jewish scholars, that "the wisest of the Greeks (all the philosophers including Plato, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and the Stoics) learned to adopt these conceptions of God from principles with which Moses supplied them," (Josephus, Against Apion, 2.163-168).

To avoid accusations from fellow Jews that they were abandoning their own traditions, Hellenized Jews began to claim that Pagan philosophy was originally Jewish! Hermippus asserted that Pythagoras had received his wisdom from the Jews (Hengel, M., op. cit., 100). Hermippus, in 220 BCE, was the first to connect Pythagoras with the Jews. Aristobulus developed this ludicrous idea, announcing that Plato and Aristotle had borrowed from Moses (Ibid., 99). Artapanus wrote a historical fantasy in which he equated Moses with Hermes Trimegistus, the mythical founder of the Egyptian Mysteries, and with Musaeus, the mythical founder of the Greek Mysteries (Ibid., 97-9). Philo is part of this long line of Jewish Pythagoreans. He repeats the claims of his predecessors and even quotes from a forged *Testament of Orpheus* to prove the charge of the "theft" of the Greeks! Eventually this propaganda became unquestioned dogma. Constantine in his speech at Nicaea repeats the charge that the Greek philosophers had plagiarized Moses (R. Lane-Fox, Pagans and Christians, 1986, p. 646).

Although absurd, such ideas made it easier for Jews to retain their national dignity while at the same time adopting the philosophy of their Pagan neighbors and participating in cosmopolitan society.

This religious synthesis of Judaism and the Mystery Religions is to be a complete success; especially in light of the fact that such a religious synthesis is not contained in the Greek LXX Septuagint, the forged Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, which will quickly become the Old Testament for the entire Greek speaking world and the foundation for all later quotes for Rome's New Testament and the depiction of Jesus as it forms the paramaters of the "Jesus Myth.

Let us continue our study.





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# THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS...WHO WERE THEY

## #3

### HELLENIZED JEWISH SCRIPTURES

We saw in the previous article that Philo and others claimed a Jewish ancestry for the wisdom of the Pagan Mysteries. These Hellenized Jews portrayed Paganism and Judaism as essentially parts of the same religious tradition.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this fact, that Hellenized Jews claimed a Jewish origin for Pagan philosophies and Pagan religious ideas, so crucial and important?

This justified the Hellenized Jews to introduce multiple Pagan concepts and philosophies into Judaism and we end up with a religious synthesis that departs from normative Judaism, Moses, and the Prophets! The final reality of this is that the concepts of the Jewish Messiah will change drastically. Instead of a human being from the loins of David who is anointed by YHWH into a Cosmic Godman who comes to earth as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. This amalgamation of Egyptian Mysteries, Greek Philosophy, and Judaism finds its ultimate expression with the later translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This falsified Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint, become the foundation for all Christian Old Testaments and every quote in the New Testament which is applied to "the Jesus" of the New Testament.

In the second century, the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek under the influence of Platonic philosophy. The legend that Ptolemy I and Demetrius Phalerion sponsored the translation of the Septuagint is a fiction created in the middle of the second century in a letter by Pseudo-Aristeas. Also legendary is that 72 separate Jewish scribes turned out 72 versions that were unanimous in their faithful translation of the sacred texts. In fact the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was made in parts over two centuries: the Pentateuch over the course of the third century, Isaiah and Jeremiah during the first half of the second century, and Psalms and the rest of the prophets during the second half of the second century (J. Marlowe, The Golden Age Of Alexandria, 1971, p. 83). The Greek translation, which we have inherited as the Christian Old Testament, updated and reinterpreted Jewish scripture in line with Greek culture, Greek philosophy and Pagan religions. It modernized its geographical picture of the world, adapted some passages to appeal to the prevailing political climate in Alexandria, and changed details of the Law of Moses to fit the current legal practices of Egypt. It removed offensive anthropomorphisms, elucidated words that are obscure in the original in the light of Greek concepts, but most important than all, it added allusions to Greek mythology, and made its philosophy harmonious with Platonic doctrines. (Hengel, op. cit., p. 96).

**Answer for yourself:** What are the staggering implications that we must realize from this synthesis of paganism with Judaism as we find in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek?

**The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures incorporated many religious tenants of Dionysus and blended them with Jewish Messianic ideas and this become the foundation for all Christian Old Testaments and later quotes as found in the New Testament as applied to Jesus! Dionysus, the dying/rising Godman is recast as Jesus!**

Hellenized Jews also wrote a number of new spiritual texts which demonstrate the interpenetration of Jewish and Pagan ideas. Hengel writes of the material composed between the Old and New Testaments, "Almost all the Jewish literature from this period that has come down to us is essentially religious and political propaganda." **Written mostly in Greek, using Greek rhetorical flourishes, it presents a Judaism that is often indistinguishable from Paganism** (M. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 1980, p. 51).

These new spiritual texts which were written between the Jewish Old Testament and the Christian New Testament are known as the "intertestamental" works.

**The Letter of Aristeas was written c. 130 B.C.E. by an Alexandrian Jew but attributed to an Aristeas who had lived over a century earlier.** (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 243). The Letter of Aristeas, for example, **equates Jehovah and Zeus**, and argues for harmony between Jews and Greeks, who are portrayed as sharing one culture and one vision of the Good Life.

*The Books of Enoch* also draws on Pagan motifs. These scriptures were attributed to the ancient Jewish Patriarch Enoch, but in the hands of Hellenized Jews he becomes a grand mythological figure, equated with the legendary Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus. *1 Enoch*, written in the second century B.C.E., **reinvents the Old Testament figure as an image of the Greco-Egyptian Hermes, a divine scribe, astronomer, and messenger of God.** Just as Hermes wrote 365 books, so Enoch is said to have written 366 books and lived 365 years. Barnstone describes **1 Enoch as representing "the development of that side of Judaism to which historically Christianity in large measure owes its existence."** In the middle of the first century an Alexandrian Jew wrote *2 Enoch*, which presents Enoch as a Messiah of the "invisible God" (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 485).

One scholar notes:

In their wondrous and transcendent poetic vision, these documents contain universal stories and preoccupations which relate them to other great myths of the ancient world (Ibid.).

This inter-testamental "Wisdom Literature" no longer divides humanity into Jews and Gentiles, but rather into the "wise and foolish." It stresses spiritual piety rather than obedience to the Laws of Moses and portrays Jehovah not as a Jewish god, but as Lord of the whole Earth. Written in the first few centuries BCE, these works include Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, Odes of Solomon, and Psalms of Solomon. **Wisdom is often personified as a female aspect of the Lord, and there are numerous references to the "Son of Man," who also appears in the second-century Book of Daniel.**

Jews even created their own version of the Pagan *Sibylline Oracles*. The original Pagan oracles were attributed to the Sibyl, a prophetess believed to be centuries old who, in a state of ecstasy, spoke the words of God. Sometime in the second century BCE, an Alexandrian Jew invented a Jewish Sibyl and composed her sayings in perfect Greek hexameters. The Jewish Sibylline Oracles circulated widely throughout the Roman Empire (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 501 ff).

**Jewish inter-testamental literature often personifies wisdom as "Sophia," as did the ancient Pagans.** As a modern scholar notes, this personification of Jewish wisdom (see Proverbs) "is entirely Greek and has no counterpart in orthodox Jewish theology" (J. Marlowe, *The Golden Age of Alexandria*, 1971, p. 243). Another scholar explains, **"The personification of this Hellenistic cosmos and feminine counterpart to, or consort of, Jehovah generally drew upon the characteristic traits of the Hellenistic**



goddesses and especially upon the imagery of the wisest of the goddesses, Isis. Even as the Hellenistic goddess of the cosmos opposed and was opposed by chaotic Tyche/Fortuna, so the Jewish Sophia, the cosmic principle of order, was opposed by the figure of "the foolish woman" or Folly, the cosmic principle of disorder. This antithetical structure is recounted in the biblical book of Proverbs concerning two sisters, Folly and Wisdom" (L.H. Martin, *The Hellenistic Religions*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1987, p. 108).

The Jewish Sophia appears from as early as the third century B.C.E., when she is described as Jehovah's consort in the Book of Proverbs (Martin, op. cit., 108-9, quoting Proverbs Chap. 3 v 19).

Three centuries later, echoing Pagan Mystery doctrines, the Jewish philosopher Philo wrote of Moses as "the child of parents incorruptible and wholly free from stain, his father being God, who is likewise Father of all, and his mother Sophia, through whom the universe came into existence." For Philo, as for the Gnostics, Sophia is the "Mother of the Logos" (W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 84).

The central role given to the Divine Feminine by the Pagan philosophers, the Hellenized Jews of the inter-testamental period and later by the Gnostics, is strong evidence for a direct line of evolution linking these three traditions together Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, *The Jesus Mysteries*, Harmony Books, 1999, p. 181-182).

## THE EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES & THE IMPORTANCE OF MOSES

Above I have patiently laid out by the hands of multiple scholars how the Hellenized Jews wanted to integrate the wisdom of the Pagan Mysteries with their own spiritual traditions and did so through not only the falsification of the Hebrew Scriptures when translated into Greek where pagan religious ideas were incorporated into the Greeks translation but as well the continued synthesis of Judaism and pagan philosophy and religious ideas.

**Answer for yourself:** Did these Hellenized Jews create a specifically Jewish version of the Gentile Pagan Mysteries and is this unique religious synthesis to be found in the later depiction of Jesus in the New Testament? The answer is "yes" but we still need more proof to satisfy any doubters.

The clues we need to answer this question are found in the works of Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-40 CE), a well-respected Jewish leader and famous Jewish philosopher.

J. Marlowe in *The Golden Age Of Alexandria*, on page 241, states that Philo is "The last and greatest representative of the Alexandrian-Jewish tradition of Hellenistic Judaism" Following violent riots in Alexandria between Jews and Greeks in 38 CE, Philo was chosen as an ambassador to Rome by the Jewish community. He only visited Jerusalem once in his life, contrary to Jewish Law, which demanded thrice-yearly attendance. From the evidence of his writings he did not know Hebrew.

Philo was devoted to his native Judaism, but was also thoroughly Hellenized and obsessed with Pagan philosophy. He writes of philosophers as an international brotherhood of world citizens who "dwell in the cosmos as their city," looking after all alike, and eulogizes:

*Such men, though comparatively few in number, keep alive the covered spark of Wisdom secretly, throughout the cities of the world, in order that Virtue may not be absolutely quenched and vanish from our human kind.* (W. Kingsland, *The Gnosis*, 1937), p. 106).

Among the ancients, Philo particularly revered Pythagoras and his follower Plato, whom he called "the great" and "the most sacred." The Christian philosopher Clement of Alexandria refers to Philo as "the Pythagorean."

Clement of Alexandria, in *Stromata*, 1.15.72 and 2.19.100, twice calls Philo "the Pythagorean" even though he knows that he is "Judaean." Like all followers of Pythagoras, Philo was well versed in music, geometry, and astrology, as well as Greek literature from every age. J. Marlowe in *The Golden Age Of Alexandria*, on page 243 states that "Philo had undoubted faith that a study of mathematics and astronomy would lead to a perception of spiritual realities." **Also, like other Pythagoreans, he was immersed in the mysticism of the Pagan Mysteries.**

Philo uses what he calls "the method of the Mysteries" to reveal Jewish scriptures as allegories encoding secret spiritual teachings (W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 355). **Philo interprets the "historical" story of Moses and the Exodus as a mystical metaphor for the path that leads through this world to God. The guide on this journey is the familiar Pagan figure of the "Logos."**

**Answer for yourself:** Would this "mystical metaphor" of Philo, as taken from the Exodus and the life of Moses as the Old Testament way to God, later become the foundation for the New Testament story of "the Christ" and Jesus?

**Answer for yourself:** Is this Philo "allegory" of the path to God, as taken from the Old Testament, used as a "pattern" for a similar path to God in the New Testament but told through the life of Jesus? Yes it is as we shall quickly see.

For Philo, as for the sages of the Mysteries, the Logos is "the only and beloved Son of God (W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 355). Philo, like his Pagan counterparts, is unconcerned with the name given to the Logos: **"And many names belong to the Logos, for he is called the Name of God, and the Man after his image"** (T.R. Wallis, *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, 1992, p. 244). Like the sages of the Mysteries, he teaches that the wonders of the visible world are designed to lead humans to the experience of mystical union with God (J. Gregory, *The Neoplatonists*, 1987, p. 26). **There are many resemblances between the thoughts of Philo and Plotinus, including the view that the goal of human life is the vision of God. All of these ideas were inherited from the Pagan Mysteries to which, as one modern scholar remarks, "Philo's works prove a notable indebtedness."**

Philo did not only adopt the philosophy of the Mysteries, but claimed to be an initiate himself - but not of the Pagan Mysteries, however (H.R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration*, 1929, Chapter 9, "The Mysticism of Philo"): **"Philo acknowledged that he had been initiated into the sacred mysteries by Moses. He did not shrink from speaking of himself as a hierophant and he urged others to serve in a similar capacity for the uninitiated. He encouraged Jews not to participate in Pagan initiations, as they had their own specifically Jewish Mysteries: the Mysteries of Moses!"** (H.R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration*, 1929, Chapter 9, p. 255 ff). Willoughby states that Philo "followed mystery practices by laying upon his disciples the charge of secrecy. Those who were adepts in the lore of his cult were regarded as an esoteric group, and he addressed them with formulas that were familiar to mystery initiates." Philo laid down the rule that none of "Moses' Disciples" might be initiated into Pagan cults as there were Mysteries in their own religion to which they ought to aspire. According to Philo, Moses was the great initiator, "a hierophant of the ritual and teacher of divine things." Philo also calls himself a hierophant and initiator in the Jewish Mysteries (Ibid., 256). **In Life of Moses, 2.71, Philo says that God initiated Moses on the mountain.** In *The Giants*, p. 54, he says that Moses thereafter became a hierophant.

He writes of "teaching initiation to those initiates worthy of the most sacred initiations." As in the Pagan Mysteries, his initiates formed a secret mystical sect and were required to be morally pure. As in the Pagan Mysteries, they were sworn to never reveal the "veritably sacred Mysteries" to the uninitiated, lest the ignorant should misrepresent what they did not understand and in so doing expose the Mysteries to the ridicule of the vulgar.

For Philo, initiation was the entrance to a new world, an invisible country, the world of ideas where "the purified mind could contemplate the pure and untainted nature of those things which are invisible and only



discernible by the intellect As in the Pagan Mysteries, the purpose was for the initiate to become transformed into a divine being through the experience of religious ecstasy. In the manner of the Mysteries, Philo writes of *enthousiazein* (being divinely inspired), *korubantian* (being mystically frenzied), *bakeuein* (being seized by divine madness), *katechesthai* (being possessed by the deity) and *ekstasis* (ecstasy). J. Marlowe, in The Golden Age Of Alexandria, on page 249, shares with the reader that he regards **Philo as "the precursor of Gnosticism, of Neoplatonism, and of Christian mysticism."**

## CONCLUSION

We have seen irrefutable proof of the synthesis of Judaism with Greek philosophy and the Mystery Religions. In so doing we come to find the alteration of prior Jewish concepts held sacred in the Hebrew Scriptures whereby they and their intended meanings were altered by Hellenized Jewish scribes when translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. We saw the synthesis of the dying/rising God-man, Dionysus, with Judaism and that many of these "mysteries" were incorporated into the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures in order to overcome anti-Semitism and blend pagan philosophy and Greek ideas with the ancient Jewish religion. It will be these religious tenets which will become the foundation for an Alexandria, Judaism, which will carry a historic influence not only in Egypt, but in Palestine and the Greek world through the spread of the Greek language and the Greek Old Testament. In this unique religious synthesis of Judaism and Pagan philosophy and Mystery Religions the concept of the dying - rising God-man becomes intertwined with the religious concepts of the Jewish Messiah. We see these ideas spread not only with the Therapeutae but with the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt, and Palestine. In Acts 6 we find these same "Essene Priest" join the "Jesus Movement" in Palestine and with them come these novel ideas which they apply to the Jewish Messiah. The Jewish Messiah through such Essene writings as the Book of Enoch, and others, becomes a transformed Dionysus and this reshaped Messianic "identity" is later woven into the Jewish store of Jesus as we find in the New Testament. In so doing the "mystery" revealing the path to God as seen with the Moses of the Hebrew Scriptures is presented through the depiction of Jesus in the New Testament. We will see this much more clearly when we examine the Exodus allegory. In closing understand that it will be these "believers" who will fashion the religion known as "Christianity" today. Let us continue to investigate the identity of these earliest Christians as our focus now moves from Alexandria, Egypt, to Jerusalem.

Now let us continue our study.



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# THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS...WHO WERE THEY

## #4

In the previous article we saw the synthesis of Greek philosophy, Mystery Religions, and Judaism under the influence of Philo and his writings. We also saw this unique religious synthesis invading even the sacred Scriptures when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. Philo's works survived the mass destruction of ancient texts by the Roman Church because of a strange quirk of history. Bishop Eusebius, the fourth. century Church propagandist, could find little evidence from which to construct a history of Christianity, so he eagerly seized upon a description in one of Philo's books, of a group of Jews called the Therapeutae. Eusebius understood Philo's description of their spring festival as reminiscent of the Christian celebration of Easter and Eusebius, therefore, claimed that he had discovered the earliest Christians in Alexandria (Philo of Alexandria, *Book IX*, 107).

Eusebius asserted that the officials of the Therapeutae were the first bishops, priests, and deacons, and that no one can fail to see in these men, the Therapeutae, the first Christians.

**Answer for yourself:** Was he right? Well "yes" and "no." Let me explain.

The spring, of course, was also the time when Pagans celebrated their festival of the dying and resurrecting godman, so Eusebius is unjustified in his assumption. Philo wrote about the Therapeutae in 10 C E, which would be 20 years before the supposed date of the crucifixion, so we can safely conclude that the Therapeutae are not the early Literalist Christians that Eusebius would have us believe (Philo of Alexandria, *Book IX*, p. 107). Yet, ironically, Eusebius might well have been right in a way, which he would never have intended. For the Therapeutae are a group of Jews clearly practicing a Jewish version of the Pagan Mysteries - exactly the same sort of group of believers with similar beliefs from the myth of Osiris-Dionysus which is parallel to the synthesized Jesus story we find in the New Testament. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that the Osiris-Dionysus myth is replayed in the Jesus story in the New Testament.

We can tell that the Therapeutae were Jews because they celebrated the Jewish festival of the Pentecost and kept sacred the Sabbath (Philo of Alexandria, *Book IX*, 131, 30-1). The Therapeutae's observance of the Sabbath and Pentecost along with their practice of the Mystery Religions reveal without a doubt the unique synthesis of Judaism with the pagan mysteries, Dionysus with Messianic concepts, etc. This explains the Jesus myth in the New Testament as Dionysus replayed through Judaism. Yet in every other way, they resembled a Pythagorean community. As in Pythagorean communities, the Therapeutae dressed in white, shared all their goods in common and admitted women as equals because they "possessed the same eager desire and had made the same deliberate choice as the men." Philo tells us about the Therapeutae in a book called *On the Contemplative Life*. "The contemplative life" was a phrase used by Pythagoreans throughout the ancient world to describe the way of life in their monastic communities. Indeed, Philo tells us that the Therapeutae were a "race of men found in many parts of the inhabited world, in both the Greek and non-Greek world, sharing in the perfect Good" (Philo of Alexandria, *Book IX*, 125).



As already discussed, Philo was himself known as "the Pythagorean" and he writes of the Therapeutae in the language of mystical mathematics characteristic of the followers of Pythagoras:

*In the first place they all come together at the end of every seventh week, for they reverence not only the simple period of seven days, but also the period of the square of seven, since they know that the seven is pure and ever-virgin. Their seventh-day festival then is only a prelude to their greatest feast, which is assigned to the fiftieth, the most holy and natural of numbers, the sum of the powers of the perfect right-angled triangle, which has been appointed as the origin of the generation of the cosmic elements. (Philo of Alexandria, Book IX, 153,65).*

Like the ancient Pagan sages, Philo contrasts the unintelligent worship of externals by the misinstructed in all religions with the worship of the true God by those, like the Therapeutae, who follow the contemplative life **Like Pagan initiates, the Therapeutae saw the literal interpretation of their scriptures as only an outer covering, concealing secret mystical meaning. They believed that: "The exegesis of the sacred writings treats the inner meaning conveyed in allegory."**~ Philo writes:

*The whole interval from dawn to sunset they devote to their exercise. Taking the sacred writings they spend their time in philosophizing and interpreting their ancestral code allegorically, for they think that the words of the literal meaning are symbols of a hidden nature which is made plain only by the under-meaning. Philo of Alexandria, Book IX, 129 ff., 28-9).*

The Therapeutae's obsession with allegory places them securely in the Pythagorean tradition. Traditionally the Stoic philosophers are considered to have pioneered the allegorical treatment of mythology, however Delatte, supported by M. Détienne, has pointed out that **the Pythagoreans practiced it long before the Stoics began to use this method systematically**, (C.J. De Vogel, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, 1966, p. 109). Theagenes of Rhegium was the first to apply allegorical interpretation to Homer and is held to have also been a Pythagorean. **Philo even specifically compares the divine calling received by members of the Therapeutae to the mystical enthusiasm experienced by initiates of the Mysteries of Dionysus:**

*They who betake themselves to the divine service do so not because of any custom or on someone's advice or appeal, but carried away with heavenly love, like those initiated into the Mysteries of Dionysus; they are afire with God until they behold the object of their love. (Philo of Alexandria, Book IX, 119, 11-12).*

Describing the coming together of separate groups of men and women in the rites of the Therapeutae, Philo writes:

*When each band has feasted apart by itself, drinking of God-pleasing nectar, just as in the rites of Dionysus men drink the wine unmixed, then they join together, and one chorus is formed of the two bands, in imitation of the **joined chorus on the banks of the Red Sea** because of the wonderful works that had been there wrought. (Ibid., 165, 83-5).*

**That Philo can, in one sentence, compare the Therapeutae to both initiates of the Mysteries of Dionysus and the followers of Moses on the banks of the Red Sea shows just how integrated Pagan and Jewish traditions had become. Such passages can leave us in no doubt that certain Jews had indeed embraced Paganism and combined it with Judaism to produce a specifically Jewish version of the ancient Mysteries.**

**Here, then, we have found exactly the sort of community, which could have produced the Dionysus-Jesus myth of the New Testament. It was the Greek Mystery Religion all over again but this time expressed not through Osiris of Egypt, or Dionysus of Greece, but through Jesus of Israel. This was Judaism's expression of the Pagan Mysteries which is fitting fruit from all the years of Hellenism. And they live exactly where we would expect them to-near that great melting-pot of Pagan and Jewish cultures, Alexandria.**

**Philo tells us:**

*In Egypt there are crowds of them in every province and especially round Alexandria. For they who are in every way the most highly advanced come as colonists, as it were, to the Therapeutic fatherland, to a spot exceedingly well adapted for the purpose, perched on a fairly high terrace overlooking Lake Mareotis, immediately south of Alexandria (Ibid., 125, 21-3).*

Lake Mareotis is a few miles from where Herodotus witnessed the celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris before tens of thousands of people 500 years previously (Herodotus, The Histories, Book 2, 63). Here, Philo tells us, the Therapeutae were also "initiated into the Mysteries of the sanctified life" (Philo of Alexandria, op. cit., 127, 25) and, just like the sages of the Pagan Mysteries before them and the Gnostic Christians after them (Ibid., 115, 2-3).

## CONCLUSION

**Although it may at first have seemed unlikely that Jews could have adopted the Pagan Mysteries, this is clearly exactly what happened.** If it were not for our Christian culture, which portrays the Jews as distinct from and in opposition to the Pagan civilizations all around them, this would not seem so extraordinary. Every other culture in the Mediterranean had embraced the Mysteries. **It was inevitable that, sooner or later, Hellenized Jews would also integrate this universal mysticism with Judaism.** Let's review some of the evidence:

- Pagan and Jewish cultures have met and integrated throughout history.
- By the time that Jesus is supposed to have lived, Galilee was surrounded by Hellenized cities, which were the home of eminent Pagan philosophers and centers for the Mysteries of Dionysus.
- In Babylon Jews were renowned for their knowledge of Pagan astrology and practiced the Mysteries of Tammuz. These Mysteries are recorded in the Old Testament as having been practiced by Jews in Jerusalem itself. Jews associated Jehovah with Osiris-Dionysus and were expelled from Rome for introducing the Mysteries of Sabazius.
- Jews adopted the Greek language, joined Greek *gymnasias*, rewrote the Exodus as a Greek-style play, translated Jewish scripture under the influence of Pagan philosophy, and wrote new scriptures combining Jewish and Pagan motifs.
- Jewish philosophers claimed that Greek philosophers had received their wisdom from the Old Testament prophet Moses, thus portraying Paganism and Judaism as essentially parts of the same religious tradition.
- Philo the Pythagorean claimed to be a hierophant in the Mysteries of Moses, which resemble the Pagan Mysteries.
- The Therapeutae are Jewish Pythagoreans.
- Like initiates of the Pagan Mysteries, the Therapeutae believed that their myths encoded secret mystical truths.
- Philo compares the Therapeutae to the followers of Dionysus.
- The Therapeutae lived by a lake near Alexandria where the Mysteries of Osiris had been celebrated for hundreds of years.

**Answer for yourself:** Were the Therapeutae of Alexandria proto-Christians?

Alexandria was the center of Pagan mysticism in late antiquity, had the largest Jewish population outside Judea, and was the home of the greatest masters of the Christian Gnosis during the first few centuries CE. **Clement tells us that it was here that the Gospel of Mark, the earliest New Testament gospel, was written. It is the most obvious place for the Jesus Myth to have been created and adapted from the prior Dionysus myth.**



**Answer for yourself:** Did the Therapeutae, having developed their own version of the ancient Mysteries, take the logical next step?

**Answer for yourself:** Did they also adopt the Mystery myth of Osiris-Dionysus and rework it as the story of a Jewish dying and resurrecting godman called Jesus?

The answer is fairly obvious when we look at all the evidence. However, that the Mysteries were being practiced by Jews strongly supports the idea that some such group of Jewish initiates, quite possibly the Therapeutae themselves, were responsible for creating the Jesus story.

**The mystical wisdom of the Mysteries was encoded in the myth of Osiris-Dionysus.** Surely it would have been irresistible, having created a specifically Jewish form of the Mysteries, not to also adapt this great ancient myth. Hellenized Jews had rewritten the Exodus as a Greek play in the style of Euripides.

**Answer for yourself:** Why not also rewrite Euripides' *The Bacchae*, in which Dionysus comes to Thebes, as a Jewish tragedy in which the godman comes to Jerusalem?

Throughout the years of study into this area I am completely convinced that Jesus Myth of the New Testament is the Jewish version of the Dionysus Myth. This was the only credible explanation of all the evidence we had before us. But there were still a few intriguing questions that remained unanswered.

**Answer for yourself:** We knew that the Jesus story was a myth, but how had it come to be interpreted as history?

**Answer for yourself:** How had Paul's mythical Christ become the man from Nazareth that is portrayed in the gospels? Pagan stories of the dying and resurrecting godman did not claim to relate actual events, so why was the Jesus story presented as a literal biography?

To answer these questions we decided to deconstruct the Jesus myth itself, to discover how it had been created and how it had come to be historicized. The key to understanding its construction, we realized, is to recognize something so obvious it is staggering that it has been so easily missed. The hero of the Jewish Mystery myth is a composite character. **Jesus is a synthesis of two pre-existing mythical figures: the Pagan godman and the Jewish Messiah.**



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# THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS...WHO WERE THEY

## #5

We saw in the previous article who Philo was influenced by Pythagoras how his followers introduced the Egyptian Mysteries into Greece. You might think that just set up a cult of Osiris but they did much more. The Mysteries of Osiris contained doctrines that were deeply heretical in fifth-century B.C.E. Athens, especially the idea that a god could die.

Since the basic axiom of traditional Greek piety is that the gods are immortal, to speak of their death is the gravest sort of blasphemy" (C.H. Kahn, The Art and Thought of Heraclitus, 1979), p. 219: Herodotus is extremely careful in his account of the death of Osiris-Dionysus: "Who it is they mourn on this occasion it is not pious for me to say"

So, to avoid simply being shunned and persecuted for introducing a foreign superstition, the Pythagoreans transformed a minor Greek deity, Dionysus, into a Greek version of the mighty figure of Osiris. In this way, the Greeks were introduced to the Egyptian Mysteries in a form that seemed indigenous to themselves (W.K.C. Guthrie, Orpheus and the Greek Religion, 1952, p. 110). Guthrie makes a brilliant point in his book: referring to the Orphics, writes, *"Few who had a message to preach in Greece would think of doing so by inventing new myths or new rites, and thus alienating at the outset the conservative minds of those whom they wished to influence. The change was accomplished by the infusion of new meaning into the myths and rites that were ready to hand"*. This approach was adopted by all other Mediterranean cultures, which embraced the Mysteries. They also transformed an indigenous deity into the dying and resurrecting godman.

**Answer for yourself:** Are there any similarities between what the Pythagoreans did when introducing the Egyptian Mysteries of Osiris into Greece and what the Therapeutae faced when trying to introduce the Egyptian Mysteries into Judaism? Yes there is.

Jewish Pythagorean community such as Philo's Therapeutae wishing to introduce the ancient Mysteries to the Jews would have faced very similar problems to those encountered by the Pythagoreans five centuries previously. In order to make the Mysteries easily accessible to Jews they needed an indigenous mythological figure they could transform into a Jewish Osiris-Dionysus.

The Jews had dispensed with all gods and goddesses, and worshiped only their one God, Jehovah. But while Jehovah could be equated with Plato's supreme Oneness, he did not have a mythological biography like the Pagan gods, which could be adapted to become the Osiris-Dionysus myth. Unlike other cultures the Jews had no minor deities, so there was only one Jewish mythological figure who could possibly be transformed into Osiris-Dionysus: the Messiah.



The Hebrew word *Messiah* means "Anointed," which in Greek is "Christ" The term was originally used to designate kings and high priests, who were ritually anointed with oil. In the Old Testament it is frequently used to refer to the reigning king (G.A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist*, 1975, p. 111-11. In later years, when the Jews were a conquered and defeated people, and the concept of "the Messiah" changed. Because of the great persecution of the Jewish people by the great and mighty Roman Empire the concept of the Messiah came to signify a future redeemer who would come to free them from their oppressors and restore the Jewish state under a king of the line of their great King David (J. Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 1964, p. 269. The literature of the Jews, many written by the Essenes, 1 and 2 Enoch, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *The Apocalypse of Baruch*, *The Assumption of Moses*, etc., provided the material later used in Christian apocalypses. After the Roman occupation of Judea in 63 BCE the situation for the Jews became increasingly desperate and it seemed that only a cosmic act of God could break the vast Empire, which persecuted them, so the Messiah came to be seen as a supernatural figure whose arrival would herald the end of time (Wells, op. cit., p. 112). From the first century BCE to the present, several dozens of Jewish messiahs have appeared. While each event has its own circumstances, the appearances and their accounts occur with some frequency in communities throughout the Jewish world. Just to name a few we should mention Bar-Kochba in 132 C.E. which ended in absolute failure as had all previous "messianic events." Claimants to the office of Messiah continued to come forth in Jewish history for hundreds of years. Probably the most prominent false messiah who came after Bar Kochba was the 17th century Turkish Jew, Shabbetai Zevi. He proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, and traveled widely to Egypt, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and other places. He attracted rabbis, scholars and common people, and concocted a strange mixture of teachings and bizarre customs, based in part on kabbalism, and, in part, on a manic-depressive psychosis. When finally he was arrested by the Turkish authorities and given the choice of being put to death or converting to Islam, Zevi chose Islam. I could go on but as of now there has been no public appearance and truthful fulfilling of the Hebrew Scriptures by which we might recognized the Messiah of Israel. The result of numerous human Messiahs and failed "messianic events led to the translation of the Messianic Expectation being changed from the human to the cosmic plane.

The construction of the Jesus story suggests that those responsible for the incorporation of the Egyptian Mysteries into Judaism took the only option available to them and synthesized the dying and resurrecting godman of the Mysteries with the Jewish Messiah. The gospels clearly state that Jesus is the Messiah. He is claimed to be born in Bethlehem from the line of David-just as the Messiah must be. He is called the Messiah by Peter. He is even named Joshua (Jesus in Greek), which was the expected name of the Messiah. The Joshua who led the Israelites into the promised land was the model for several Messiahs recorded by Josephus. A Jewish Sibylline oracle of the period predicts the coming of a man from the sky who will cause the sun to stand still, as Joshua had done, and The Epistle of Barnabas 12.8 also links Jesus with Joshua (Wells, op. cit., 69, note 28). Yet Jesus the Messiah is actually only a thin veil concealing the quite different figure of Jesus the dying and resurrecting godman which is little more than a retransformation of Osiris-Dionysus.

This is particularly clear from the accounts of his birth. Both Matthew and Luke give us long and detailed genealogies to show that Joseph is of the line of David, yet both of them also tell us that Jesus is not Joseph's son at all, but God's son. It is remarkable that so many commentators pass over the extraordinary contradiction within these two gospels without offering any convincing explanation.

**Answer for yourself:** Did the writers of the Gospel of Matthew and Luke not realize the absurdity of what they were saying? Even if it is a result of later additions and bad editing, surely such a paradox could not have been unintentionally allowed to remain in the gospels!

Today many scholars will teach us that the gospel writers were well aware of the contradiction they were setting up. They knew that what they were writing was a myth encoding secret teachings. So, they each presented a genealogy to make it appear that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, son of David, while at the same time telling those "with ears to hear" that Jesus was actually Osiris-Dionysus, the Son of God and a



## virgin mother.

The genealogies given by Luke and Matthew are entirely different because they are literary constructs and really have no importance. **What matters is that through the vehicle of the Messiah the Jews are given access to the Egyptian Mysteries encoded in the myth of Osiris-Dionysus.** As Origen explains, "breaks in the narrative structure, irrational and impossible situations" were all placed in the scriptures deliberately to make sure that readers did not get caught in the lowest literal interpretation for too long, for "if the sequence and elegance of the narrative were obvious throughout, we would not believe that anything other than the obvious meaning could be meant in the scriptures". "Certain snares" and "obstacles and impossibilities" are interwoven into scripture to prevent the reader "sticking to the letter, and not learning its more divine meaning" (Origen, *On first principles*, 4.2.9, quoted in R. Doran, *Birth of a Worldview*, 1995, p. 76).

In this manner, while conforming as much as possible to Jewish expectations about the Messiah, the Jesus story makes it plain that this is not his true identity.

*Matt 22:41-46 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. (KJV)*

For example, the Jewish Messiah was expected to be a warrior king come to liberate Judea from her enemies and re-establish the line of David. Yet at his trial Jesus clearly announces:

*John 18:36-37 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (KJV)*

When Peter tells Jesus he believes him to be the Messiah, Jesus neither affirms nor denies it, but simply predicts that the Son of Man must die and resurrect. **When Peter rebukes him because the Jewish Messiah cannot die in this way,** Jesus rebukes him back, calling him Satan! **Peter is condemned for being unable to make the transition from the Jewish idea of the savior as victorious Messiah to the Pagan conception of the savior as sacrificed godman.**

*Mark 8:27-33 27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. (KJV)*

For traditional Jews it was unthinkable that the Messiah, who was expected to ride in triumph over all of



Judea's enemies, could possibly die as a common criminal. Indeed, the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy specifically says that "Anyone hanged on a tree is accursed"

*Deut 21:23 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (KJV)*

Need I remind you that this is the very description given by Peter as the fate of Jesus. Peter uses this description twice, in Acts 10:39 and 5:30.

*Acts 5:30 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (KJV)*

*Acts 10:39 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: (KJV)*

In Judaism the Messiah was not thought of as someone who would save by his own sacrificial death. This is the role of Osiris-Dionysus. In his death and resurrection, therefore, Jesus is revealed not as the Jewish Messiah destined to bring military victory and national salvation, but as the godman of the Mysteries who brings spiritual victory and mystical salvation.

To help Jews over the major hurdle of Jesus' ignominious death and obvious lack of military triumph against their oppressors, Jesus is portrayed as claiming that he will return again. Having accomplished the death and resurrection of Osiris-Dionysus, he promises an imminent Second Coming when he will return in glory to smite his enemies and fulfill the expectations of the Jewish Messiah.

## THE FURTHER SYNTHESIS OF THE EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES AND JUDAISM...

Studying the Jesus story it is obvious that the creators of the Jesus Myth as found in the New Testament reworked pre-existing Jewish mythology in such a way as to marry their myth of the dying and resurrecting godman with Judaism. A perfect example of such is the transformation of Jewish Passover into a sacramental meal of the Mysteries simply by having Jesus offer bread and wine as symbols of his body and blood.

The Passover occurs in the Old Testament myth of the Exodus in which Moses leads his people from captivity in Egypt across the desert to the promised land. This was a favorite tale of Hellenized Jews, especially Philo, and forms the basis for a number of elements in the Jesus story. Mystical Jews understood the Exodus as an allegory of spiritual initiation. The Jewish people start off as "captives" in Egypt, are "called out of Egypt" by Moses, and are finally led as the "chosen people" to the promised land by the prophet Joshua. Here then are the three stages of initiation we have already found in both Gnosticism and the Pagan Mysteries: the initiate is first a "captive" (a Hylic), then is baptized to become one of the "called" (a Psychic) and finally is initiated to become one of the "chosen" (a Pneumatic) (Hippolytus, *Elenchos*, 5.8.4 ff). Hippolytus refers to the three churches of the Gnostics, the "angelic, the psychic, and the earthly, and their names are the Chosen, the Called, and the Captive" Someone was regarded as "captive" while identified with his body and blind to his true spiritual identity. Egypt was seen as a metaphor for the body and to "come forth out of Egypt" was seen as symbolizing transcending identification with the body. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea was understood as a metaphor for baptism by water. A baptized initiate was regarded as one of those "called" to make the spiritual journey. The afflictions experienced by the Jews during their 40 years wandering in the wilderness

were seen as a metaphor for the initiate's experience of being afflicted by doubts and uncertainties. The "chosen" were those who reached the promised land, symbolizing the promise of Gnosis at the end of the spiritual journey. This "Exodus Allegory" of the Gnostics is explained in more detail in another article on this website.

The motif of being "called out of Egypt" appears in Matthew's gospel, where the pregnant Mary is portrayed as an exile in Egypt before she returns to Judea to give birth to Jesus. God then declares: "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" (Matthew 2:15). In an age obsessed by hidden meanings, the double resonance in this motif must have delighted the creators of the Jesus myth. Here they were able to echo the initiation allegory of the Exodus story in which the Jews are called out of Egypt and at the same time tell the initiated reader the place from which the Jesus Myth truly originated-ancient Egypt. Both Matthew 3:17 and Luke 3:21 record the words of God that were heard at the baptism of Jesus: *"This is my **beloved son** with whom I am well pleased"*. The first utterance of the Pyramid Texts, written two millennia earlier, records the words of God at the coronation ceremony of the Pharaoh: *"The king is my eldest son who split open my womb, he is my **beloved SON** with whom I am well pleased"*

**Answer for yourself:** Is this just coincidence; especially in light of the fact that a Pharaoh was the Son of Ra, better understood as the Son of God as was Jesus? Is this a hidden reference to Egyptian Mysteries?

Moses' 40 years wandering in the wilderness, plagued by serpents and so forth, become Jesus' 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness, in which he is plagued by doubts and temptations in the form of the Devil. Moses does not himself make it to the promised land, but appoints the prophet Joshua to lead the chosen people to their final destination in his place (Deuteronomy 31:14-30). Hence Joshua (Greek: Jesus) was the name selected for the Jewish Osiris-Dionysus who leads his chosen people to the promised land of mystical rebirth (G. A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist, 1975, p. 52.) The name Joshua and Jesus both mean "In Jehovah is salvation". On a mystical level then the idea of "salvation" is connected with both Osiris-Dionysus and their recharacterization in the form of the "Jesus" of the New Testament.

Joshua represents the New Covenant of the Jewish Mysteries, which replaces the old laws and traditions represented the Moses of the Old Covenant. His first task is to appoint 12 followers (Joshua 3:12). Likewise in the Jesus myth one of Jesus' first acts is to select the 12 disciples.

**Answer for yourself:** Coincidence or a continuation of the pattern?

Various other elements in the Jesus story were obviously suggested by Jewish mythology. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on an ass, for example, draws on Pagan myth, but also echoes the Old Testament Book of Zechariah, which reads: *"Behold the king is coming riding on an ass, rejoice daughters of Jerusalem"* (Zech. 9:9). Such passages are often referred to by the gospel writers and other early Christians as prophecies which prove the truth of Jesus' divine nature. Upon closer study we find them taken out of context and one of them an outright forgery of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the light of the Jesus Myth, however, they can be seen as the allegorical - mythological motifs from which the story was constructed.

Hellenized Jews in Alexandria had for centuries been searching the Jewish scriptures to find resemblances with Pagan philosophy and the myths of Osiris-Dionysus. Many of the Old Testament books, particularly Psalms, have their origins in Egyptian poetry and wisdom literature, so veiled references to the myths of Osiris were easy to find. The Psalms derive from Egyptian religious poetry of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties (c. 1000-750 BCE) (M.A. Murray, Egyptian Religious Poetry, 1949, 50). Proverbs is based on the Egyptian instructions of Amenhotep which happens to be Solomon's other name (he was a Pharaoh), and Moses, the writer of the first five books, was born in Egypt and brought up as an Egyptian priest and many believe his other name is Akhenaton, Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. Many of his miracles are also found in Egyptian texts (D. J. Harrington, Wisdom Texts From Qumran, 1996, p. 9). The



**Alexandrian Jews and later the Christians were keen to stress Moses' Egyptian origins in a Greco-Roman world overtaken with Egyptomania.** Acts 7: 22 declares: *"Moses was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians"*. **These could then become the basis upon which to build a Jewish myth of Osiris, which was also rooted in Judaism.** This process is particularly clear in **The Gospel of Peter**, which didn't make it into the New Testament. Almost every sentence in the passion narrative of this gospel is based on scriptural references in the Old Testament! (B.M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 1987, p. 17). Metzger tells us that one of the earliest "gospels" was probably just such a collection of proof texts drawn from the Old Testament. This would be a narrative, almost recognizable as the Jesus story, but composed entirely of "prophecies" from Psalms, Proverbs, and the Pentateuch. **As we mentioned in the last article the Alexandrian Jewish scholars were systematic in their attempts to prove that the philosophy of the Greeks and the Mysteries was plagiarized from the Jews. A collection of proof texts that the story of Dionysus was derived from the Jewish scriptures might explain why so many Greek and Roman scholars were convinced that the god worshiped by the Jews was Dionysus!!!**

**In the third and second centuries BCE Jewish scriptures were translated into Greek by Hellenized Jews in Alexandria. This gave them the opportunity to create similarities between Jewish mythology and Pagan mythology, which were not there beforehand.**

**Answer for yourself:** Where is the proof for this? Well you can begin with one of our [websites where we contrast the alterations of the Hebrew Scriptures and Messianic prophecies when translated into the Greek where they are made to conform to the Dionysus Myth which later, upon being quoted in the New Testament, is applied to the New Testament Dionysus.....named Jesus.](#)

But for the record let us look at just one at this time. **The Hebrew Book of Isaiah, for example, prophesies that "a young woman will conceive and give birth to a son," but this is purposefully mistranslated in the Greek version as "a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son," bringing it into line with the Pagan idea of the virgin birth.** Isaiah 7:14, when translated from the Hebrew - Aramaic into the Greek by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt, purposefully altered the Aramaic *almah* as *parthenos*. This then became a key "proof text" in Jewish scripture used by early Christians to support the claim that Jesus was the long-awaited Jewish Messiah!

In the Gospel of Mark Jesus is made to quote from Psalm 22 on the cross:

***My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*** (Mark 15:34). This psalm also contains the lines:

***"The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet"*** (Psalm 22:16). Hence in the gospels Jesus is crucified by having his hands and feet pierced with nails.

**Answer for yourself:** What are potential problems with the above verses? Well for starters the Hebrew of Psalms 22:16 does not say what the forgers of the Greek Old Testament makes it to say.

## ADAPTING THE PAST

To create the Jesus myth the initiates of the Jesus Myth would also draw on the **inter-testamental literature, which had already synthesized Pagan and Jewish mythological motifs. These inter-testamental texts not only echo the Pagan Mysteries but also prefigure Christianity, forming a bridge between the two.** (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984), p. 202: "Since much of the inter-testamental writings were apocalyptic and messianic, the appearance of a figure such as Jesus Christ was not unexpected. **Indeed, because of the messianic nature of Jewish pseudepigrapha, many of them were altered and "Christianized" to make them reveal Christian truths**". The Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*, for example, talk of a coming apocalypse of

cosmic fire on the day of judgment and peace on Earth for the faithful. **They are full of missionary zeal, which is rare in Jewish literature but found both in the Mysteries and in Christianity. They also look forward to the coming of a Christ-a hope that Christianity claims to fulfill** (Ibid., 501-503).

Motifs that echo the Mysteries and prefigure Christianity are also found in the Books of Enoch. **As well as influencing the Jesus story, complete passages of these inter-testamental texts were transformed into Christian documents.** A whole section from *The First Book of Enoch* appears in the New Testament. Remember that when you read next time the Letter of Jude v 5-18. Like Jesus, Enoch is said to have been physically raised up to heaven (Barnstone, op. cit., 485). The same imagery is found in the description of Empedocles' apotheosis. **On Enoch's arrival he is greeted as "the Son of Man"-a title which Jesus will inherit.** (G.W. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist*, 1975, p. 116).

This title conveys the idea that Enoch and Jesus are both to be understood as Everyman characters who mythically represent all of mankind. The Hebrew expression *son of* means "the embodiment of". The Term **"The Son of Man"** is a term used repeatedly in the inter-testamental literature written in the second century BCE, in *Daniel*, 1 and 2 *Enoch*, 4 *Ezra* and *The Psalms of Solomon*. (A. Gaus, *The Unvarnished New Testament*, 1991, p. 506).

**The Son of Man is an embodiment of the idea of the primal Man.** This is another way of conveying the same idea that St. John expresses when he says that Jesus is the Logos made flesh. **Jesus and Enoch are to be understood as embodiments of the Universal Daemon, the One Consciousness that animates all beings. Just like Jesus, the embodiment of the Logos, the Son of Man in The Books of Enoch is a divine being who has existed with God from the beginning.** Also like Jesus, the Enochian Son of Man is called "a messenger from God," **"the Christ of the invisible God,"** and "a light to the Gentiles" (Barnstone, op. cit., 485 ff).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you just notice that "the Son of Man" is also called "the Christ" and both are associated with Jesus of the New Testament? Did you notice that these are "allegorical" motifs explaining Spiritual concepts such as the Divine Consciousness that animates all things and beings? Did you as well notice that this Divine Consciousness is to be understood "allegorically" as the "Logos."

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this important for our study? Simply because as we shall see the First New Testament of Marcion and the texts that comprised it in 140 C.E. will reflect ONLY this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" as the "Logos" of God which is nothing more than the same concept of the invisible Divine Cosmic Consciousness of God among mankind. For Marcion this "Christ" was not a fleshly person but only a further allegory of the Divine Eternal Principles found as expressed both in the Dionysus Mysteries as well as in the accounts of "the Christ" in the New Testament, which by the way, found their ultimate origin with Osiris in Egypt! The Jesus of the New Testament of Marcion was the "allegorical" expression of God's Wisdom which tabernacled with mankind! It is through this knowledge of the Divine which God placed within each person that one comes to know the God within which animated his very being. This is the message of the Gnostic Christians; to awake and discover you Divine soul within and know from where you came and where you return when you die. It is this "Joshua" - "Jesus" (In Jehovah is salvation) that comes to man in the form of "God's Conscious" within him with the true message of salvation as mediated between the Pure Spirit and the fleshly/matter of creation by "the Christ."

Let us resume. The inter-testamental Wisdom Literature tells of the "righteous man" who is a divine emissary sent to bring wisdom into the world. **This figure, who echoes the earlier Pagan "just man," becomes the Christian "righteous man," Jesus.** Like Jesus, he is rejected by humanity (Wells, op. cit., p.55), makes claims that evoke hostility (Ibid., 211), is maltreated, comes into conflict with the authorities, dies (Ibid.), and is finally recognized by his enemies as the "Son of God" (Ibid.).



## HOW DOES THE JESUS MYTH BECOMES HISTORY?

The Pagan Mystery godmen were clearly mythological figures whose biographies existed "out of time" in the world of dreams and images. If they were regarded as having literally lived at all, it was in ancient times indistinguishable from myth.

**Answer for yourself:** So why does the Jesus story present the myth of the Jewish godman as if it were history?

If you are familiar with Pauline literature then you are aware that the genuine letters of Paul show no sign of the Jesus story having assumed a historical setting in the first half of the first century. The unforged Pauline epistles in the New Testament make no mention of:

- the virgin "birth",
- the manger,
- the magi who come to visit the baby Jesus,
- the shepherds in the fields, the star that announced his birth,
- Herod who sought to kill the baby Jesus,
- the flight to Egypt, the dedication of Jesus in the Temple, etc.

There is no mention of ANY events by Paul concerning the "literal" birth and early life of Jesus. The first mention of Jesus by Paul is when Jesus, as the Christ, is fully grown. The reason for this, as Scholars will tell us and as verified by the writings in Marcion's First New Testament, is that

Paul was ONLY preaching a mystical "Christ"; a Messiah who, through his death and resurrection, brings rebirth to his followers. Such a primitive form of the Jesus myth has been around for over a thousand years and we trace its origin back to Osiris of Egypt. It would have initially been a secret myth of Jewish-Egyptian Mysteries, so we would not expect any evidence of its existence to have survived. Sooner or later, however, it was inevitable that the Jesus myth would become historicized.

Jews expected the Messiah to be a historical figure who literally came to rescue his people. So, if the Jewish Osiris-Dionysus was to be convincingly portrayed as the Messiah, the myth would have to be recast as a historical drama. Yet Jesus could not be said to have existed in the distant past like the Pagan Mystery godman, because such a Messiah could not bring political salvation to his people **now**. He would have to be portrayed as coming in the recent past, as this alone would make him relevant. To explain why no one had heard of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus is made to deliberately keep his Messiahship a secret. Indeed, Mark portrays even Jesus' closest disciples as failing to recognize him as the Messiah until after his death (G.A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist? 1975, p. 102). Which is ironic since it is Jesus' death that marks him as definitely not the Messiah! Again this speaks of the "allegory" of the Jesus of the New Testament for in the real world Jesus would not have had "one" follower if he preached he was to die "literally" when all of Israel waited impatiently for a military deliverance from the grips of Rome.

The Old Testament, although interpreted as mystical allegory by Hellenized Jews such as Philo, appears on the surface to be a historical record. Portraying the Jesus story as a record of actual events would, therefore, have fitted it into the general style of Jewish scriptures; and the time and place chosen as the setting for Jesus' life and death could be used by Jewish initiates, skilled in allegory, to encode symbolic messages.

The Jewish godman was given the name Joshua/Jesus after the prophet of Exodus Joshua ben Nun, whose name means "Jesus son of the Fish". This is perfect for a savior figure designed for the new astrological Age of Pisces (due to the precession of the equinoxes), symbolized by the Fish. The time chosen for Jesus' "birth" links him to an important astrological conjunction in 7 BCE, which ushered in the New Age of

Pisces (D. Fidler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, 1993, p. 169). Saturn and Jupiter came into conjunction three times during the year 7 B.C.E.: May 27, October 6, and December 1 in the sign of Pisces. That the New Age of Pisces had begun had been known to a few philosophers over a century earlier, but by the beginning of the first century had been widely disseminated. This astronomical event, combined with the deep crisis of the time, must have seemed like an important sign that the last days had arrived-Pisces is the last sign of the zodiac.This stellar conjunction also becomes the star that prefigures the birth of the godman in Pagan myth. Thus Jesus symbolically becomes the new savior for a New Age.

The time of Jesus' birth also enabled the creators of the Egyptian-Jewish Mysteries to symbolically convey other information. According to Matthew, Jesus is born in the reign of Herod, who tries to have him killed as a baby to prevent him becoming king of the Jews.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this account in the Gospel of Matthew, which was added to Marcion's Gospel after 140 C.E. so important for our study? It is the first time the "allegorical" Christ becomes "FLESH." A Divine Concept has now become a human being...at least in this text! A historical context has been made for the insertion of "the Christ" as a person among mankind!

Herod, who died in 4 BCE, was a puppet of the Romans and completely loathed by the Jews. Bringing the infant Jesus into immediate conflict with the hated king already fits Jesus into the model of the "just man unjustly accused" and portrays him as the Messiah come to defend the Jews. Luke makes a similar point by having his Jesus born 10 years later at the time of the census of 6 CE. By then the Romans had finally annexed Judea and the census was to enable them to directly tax the Jews. Judea no longer even had its own puppet administration, but was now ruled by a Roman governor. This led to desperate hopes that the Messiah would arise to protect his people and by placing Jesus' birth at this time, Luke implies that this hope has been fulfilled.

The only other event that places Jesus in a historical context is his death under the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. According to Josephus and Philo, Pilate was particularly detested by the Jews (S.G.F. Brandon, Religion In Ancient History, 1969, p. 292). Pilate was prefect for 10 years from 26 to 36 CE, when he was sent back to Rome to answer for a massacre. He was so hated that he is the only prefect from 6 to 41 to be mentioned by name by Josephus and Philo. He had violated Jewish religious taboos many times, including being the first Roman to defile the Jerusalem Temple. Josephus, in his *The Jewish War*, p 126 states: "Pilate, during the night, secretly and undercover, conveyed to Jerusalem the images of Caesar known as sigma. When day dawned this caused great excitement among the Jews: for those who were near were amazed at the sight, which meant that their laws had been trampled on-they do not permit any graven image to be set up in the city". Pilate was, therefore, the perfect choice for the role of the evil tyrant who executes the godman.

It is also relevant that the Jesus story is set in Galilee. Galilee was so thoroughly Hellenized that it was known among the Jews as "the land of the Gentiles" Josephus records that Galilee refused to defend Jerusalem against the Romans (B.L. Mack, The Lost Gospel, 1993, 51 ff.). Galilee was known as Gelil ha goim, "the land of the goim," or Gentiles. Galilee was not loyal to the Temple cult of Jerusalem and had close relations with Pagan cultures. So it was an ideal setting for the home of the Jewish Osiris-Dionysus.

The process through which the original timeless and locationless Jesus story became set in a particular time and place can be seen in the Gospel of Mark. Scholars have noticed that all the passages that mention Galilee are later additions. (Wells, op. cit., 144). For example, in the line "And passing along by the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Andrew," the words "by the sea of Galilee" are placed quite ungrammatically in the Greek syntax. This has led most New Testament scholars to believe that they were added to give a geographical location to a story that previously lacked it.

## AN ALTERNATIVE MESSIAH



In 66 CE Jews in Judea revolted against their Roman oppressors, leading to horrendous reprisals. Josephus claims that out of a population of 3,000,000 Jews 1,000,000 died and a further 100,000 were sold into slavery. Many scholars today believe these figures to be inflated. When Jerusalem finally fell it was left nothing more than smoldering ruins. Josephus writes:

All the rest of the fortifications encircling the city were so completely leveled with the ground that no one visiting the spot would believe it had once been inhabited. This then was the end to which the mad folly of revolutionaries brought Jerusalem, a magnificent city renowned to the ends of the earth"

Traditional Judaism had been in its death throes since 63 BCE when the corrupt Temple priests had themselves invited in the Romans to settle their internal disputes and in so doing put their country on the road to Roman domination. By 70 CE, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, many Jews felt completely betrayed by their god Jehovah, who had clearly failed to protect them from their enemies. Such sentiments were expressed in the Jewish literature of the time. In *The Apocalypse of Baruch*, for example, the prophet Baruch insistently interrogates Jehovah as if he were a defendant on trial:

why has God allowed Jerusalem to be captured, its Temple destroyed, its people dispersed? Baruch tells the Jewish priests to "take the keys of the sanctuary and hurl them at the heavens," commanding Jehovah to guard his own house! (Josephus, op. cit., 340, Chapter 22: "Jerusalem Destroyed"). The only hope that is offered in this bleak work is that the Messiah will finally come. Understand that at this time we have already accomplished the synthesis of the Jewish Messiah with the rising - dying Godman Dionysus. It is only a short time before, in the desperation and hopelessness of Israel at the hands of Rome, that traditions would surface and literature arise by which the "new" Osiris-Dionysus of Judaism would bring "salvation."

**Answer for yourself:** Where do we find the first instance or appearance of the Jesus Myth?

It was at some point after these disastrous events that the Jesus myth was first put into a historical context by the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Scholars tell us that it was this very Roman War and the disastrous events that not only proceeded but followed in its wake that forced the creators of the Jesus Myth to transform their myth of the dying and resurrecting godman into pseudo-history. In the face of complete national catastrophe Jews needed more than **Paul's mystical Christ**. Understand that the Logos, Sophia, etc., the Divine Intermediaries between God and man had been known for thousands of years by various names. Instead of "allegory" Israel now needed a "real" deliverer. They needed a Messiah who had actually come to save them as promised. They needed not a "spiritual" deliverance and salvation but a real flesh and blood Messiah to carry on in the tradition of King David and destroy the enemies of Israel. All the more reason that these "allegories" now become "literal"!

The crisis in Judaism did throw up many would-be Messiahs, all of whom failed. These men, known derogatorily as *zealots* or *bandits*, combined the role of political revolutionary and religious fanatic in a way comparable to modern Muslim fundamentalists. The pro-Roman Josephus writes:

*These cheats and deceivers who claimed to be inspired schemed to bring about revolutionary changes by inducing the mob to act as if possessed, and by leading them out into the wild country on the pretense that there God would show them signs of approaching freedom (Josephus, op. cit., 135).*

Many of these would-be Messiahs took the name of Joshua/Jesus.

**Answer for yourself:** Should we be surprised at this? No!

Josephus describes Judea as being full of such "brigands," "impostors," and "miracleworkers" who "deceive the people" and "promise deliverance" Some tried to repeat the miracle of the Exodus by leading their followers out into the desert where Jehovah would deliver them. One assembled a great company on the Mount of Olives, promising, like a second Joshua, that the city's walls would fall at his command and that he would

lead his followers to slaughter the Roman garrison.

In contrast, the Jesus Myth presents a quite different Messiah. Jesus is not a political revolutionary. When questioned about taxes, he tells his followers to give to Caesar what is Caesar's (Mk. 12: 13-17). His message is of mystical salvation, not national liberation. It is interesting to note that his betrayer, Judas, is given the same name as Judas of Galilee, the most infamous of all the zealot leaders, casting the fundamentalist zealots in a negative light (Brandon, op. cit., p. 287). Josephus describes Judas as the founder of one of the four schools of "philosophy," but although he outlines the differing beliefs of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes he is silent on Judas' Zealotry. As his work is a Jewish apologetic written for Roman readers, he plays down the extent to which zealotry was religiously inspired. Judas was a rabbi and the zealot war was effectively a *jihad* in which martyrs were guaranteed instant apotheosis. This tradition derived from the Maccabean revolt (173-164 BC), whose heroes were idealized as martyrs present in heaven before the throne of God. The second and fourth books of Maccabees hint at this belief, the latter stating that "those who die for God live unto God," (R. Lane-Fox, Pagans and Christians, 1986), 436.

According to Freke and Gandy, in The Jesus Mysteries on page 202, that state that they believe that the Jesus story would seem to be consciously created to give disillusioned Jews an alternative to the disastrous revolutionary Messiahs who were merely making matters worse. I believe they hit the nail on the head. Hellenized Jews, while loyal to their national traditions and having nationalistic aspirations, regarded the zealots with the same horror that modern Westernized Muslims regard fanatical Muslim fundamentalists. They realized, as had Josephus before them, that the zealots were in the process of bringing disaster upon their country and the events of 70 CE confirmed all their worst fears. Hellenized Jews living in Alexandria looked for some way of helping their compatriots streaming out of Judea as refugees.

The desperation of the times cannot be exaggerated. The Book of Esdras paints a graphic picture of the suffering of the Jews at this time: "Our priests burnt alive, and the Levites taken into captivity; our virgins have been ravished and our wives violated, our god fearing men carried off, and our children abandoned; our young men have been enslaved, and our strong warriors reduced to impotence," (2 Esdras 10:22).In the face of the failure of the nationalist Messiah to arrive in their hour of need, the Jesus Myth presented to Jews a mystical alternative, a way of restoring meaning to their shattered lives, rekindling some pride in their national identity, and integrating themselves into wider Pagan society. New initiates were attracted to the Jesus Myth by being told the quasi-historical story of Jesus, but later, when their understanding had increased, they were initiated into the Inner Mysteries, which revealed the Jesus story as a mystical analogy. Thus, dispossessed and disaffected Jewish refugees were offered hope. The expected political savior who would set the Jewish people free was transformed into a spiritual savior who could set each individual free through mystical Gnosis made available to them through "the Christ" of Paul; the radical interpretation of the Jewish Messiah given to the Greek world by Paul, himself a Gnostic.

Ironically, however, the Jesus Myth did not really take off within the Jewish community. The fate of this new faith was to be far stranger than anyone could possibly have imagined at the time. Within 100 years the Pagan godman disguised as the Jewish Messiah, who was designed to introduce the Pagan Mysteries to the Jews, was actually bringing Jewish traditions to Pagans!

## A UNIVERSAL SAVIOR

The Jewish Messiah, who at one times was a Jewish nationalistic "savior" was now destined to become a universal savior for the whole world. Jesus was destined not to remain a Jewish Messiah but to become a universal savior. This process of internationalization had already begun by the time of Paul's heated debates with the Ebonite Christians. Paul was fighting to free the Jesus Myth from unnecessary ties to Judaism and to make them attractive to more Hellenized Jews like himself. For him, the traditional Jewish Law was only relevant, if at all, to Psychic Christians. The new (essentially Pagan) teachings of the Jesus Myth had rendered



the old Jewish ways redundant. The "circumcision" party against whom Paul argued, by contrast, wished to keep the Jesus Myth distinctively Jewish. These more traditional Jewish-Christians were found in Jerusalem, the heart of Judaism, whereas Paul was a highly Hellenized Jew traveling from one Pagan city to another.

For all his zeal, Paul failed in his mission of winning Jewish converts to the Jesus Myth. At Ephesus he is said to have preached for three months in the synagogue without any results. At Antioch the Jews even attacked him. Disguising Osiris-Dionysus as the Jewish Messiah in order to smuggle the Pagan godman into Judaism was a cunning idea, but most Jews saw through this ploy very easily. A Messiah who was crucified as a criminal was not the savior they were waiting for. Christianity appeared to them as a confusing and heretical doctrine of a failed Messiah. They remembered and had enough of that; thus Paul's "Christ" as the new Jewish Messiah was rejected by conservative religious Jews.

But when Paul turned to the Greeks he at once achieved extraordinary successes. As one modern scholar remarks:

*We are compelled to admit there was something which on the one hand offended Jewish ideas, and on the other, conformed to Greek ideas. I hope I shall not be misunderstood if I say that Christ must have appeared to the Greeks as a hero. Christianity is, from a merely historical viewpoint, an enormous Greek hero cult devoted to a Jewish Messiah. (V.D. Macchiore, From Orpheus to Paul, 1930, p. 203).*

To Pagans this was a new exotic Mystery cult that incorporated elements of the intriguing Jewish tradition with the perennial wisdom of the Pagan Mysteries. As the unattractive baggage of the old Jewish Laws had been dumped by Paul, there was nothing to stop Gentiles from embracing the Jesus Mysteries. Moreover, once the myth had become historicized, the new cult of Christianity had the added appeal that it made a genuinely revolutionary claim - that the godman had actually walked the Earth in the recent past.

By the middle of the second century the Jesus Myth had been largely rejected by the Jewish community but embraced by Gentiles. Jesus was no longer portrayed as coming to save the Jews, but as coming to save the whole of humanity. Gentile Christians rejected the old Jewish traditions, as Paul had desired, so this was no longer an issue. But by this time, however, the Christian community had begun to split again into two distinct and antagonistic factions-Literalism and Gnosticism.

## THE BIRTH OF LITERALISM

After 70 CE when the Romans laid waste to Jerusalem, Jews were spread throughout the Roman Empire as slaves and refugees. Jews who had been initiated in only the Outer Mysteries, with limited half-baked ideas of what Christianity was all about, would have been flung far and wide around the ancient world, taking what they believed to be the "biography" of Jesus the Messiah with them. Those in the western areas of the Empire became cut off from the established centers of the Jesus Myth in Alexandria and the eastern areas of the Empire, and so were prevented from completing the process of initiation.

With no masters of the Gnosis within hundreds of miles, it is easy to imagine how a confused form of the Jesus Myth would quickly develop. Within a few decades these western Christians had created a religion in which the belief that Jesus was literally the dying and resurrecting Son of God was the central doctrine. Their Literalist Christianity had no place for any Inner Mysteries. It did not view the gospels as allegories, but as historical records of actual events.

During the second century, the leaders of local groups of Christians became known as *overseers* or bishops. Without any Inner Mysteries to impart, these bishops taught that eternal salvation was guaranteed to anyone who simply believed the story of Jesus to be literally true. It is this limited form of Christianity, based only on the Outer Mysteries, which would eventually become the Roman Catholic

## Church.

The original Jesus Myth along with its many mysteries, which we now call Gnosticism, continued to flourish where they had originated, in Alexandria. This city produced the great second - and third-century Gnostic masters Carpocrates, Basilides, Valentinus, Clement, and Origen. Literalism, on the other hand, gathered strength in those areas of the Empire that were cut off from the masters of the Gnosis in the East, eventually becoming centered on Rome itself, where it took on a narrow autocratic Roman character.

Early initiates of the Jesus Mysteries formed many separate groups in different places, often centered around a particular master of the Gnosis and working with their own gospels. The Gnostics maintained this tradition of mysticism, variety, and tolerance. The Literalists, by contrast, began to build a centralized authoritarian religion.

It is easy to imagine how those initiated in the Inner Mysteries would have looked on aghast at the growth of Literalism, now completely out of their control and beginning to spring up across the ancient world as a new religious cult. Many masters of the Inner Mysteries visited Rome in order to initiate Christians into the Gnosis, but they were not welcomed. Literalist bishops were not at all pleased to have some foreign mystic proclaim them to be mere "Psychic Christians" in need of a further Pneumatic initiation. They were resentful of Gnostic sages "stealing their flock" by belittling Literalist teachings and offering initiation into the secret Inner Mysteries.

The Gnostics, who had created the Jesus story in the first place, were now accused of perverting the sacred teachings of the savior. Irenaeus, the mouth-piece of Literalism, protested that Gnostics "overthrow the faith of many, by drawing them away under the pretense of superior Knowledge"The Preface to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, quoted in Ludemann, G., *Heretics*, 1995, p. 16, reveals to the reader that Irenaeus refers to the Valentinian Gnostics as "wolves in sheep's clothing". Over a century later, the Bishop of Odessa was still complaining about followers of Valentinus "stealing sheep from the Christian flock". Conflict was inevitable and a bitter battle for the soul of Christianity ensued.

## CONCLUSION

At last we felt we had found the real Jesus. He is the Mystery godman incognito! He is the mythical "Son of God" camouflaged as the historical "Son of David".

It was now clear why, unlike all the other myths of Osiris-Dionysus, the Jesus story had been given a historical setting and how, once this had happened, the growth of Literalism was unavoidable.

In closing let us review what we have discovered in this study of the development of the Jesus myth and just who were the earliest Christians:

- Jesus is Osiris-Dionysus thinly disguised as the Jewish Messiah in order to make the Pagan Mysteries accessible to Jews. His composite nature is particularly clear from the contradictory accounts of his birth, which portray him both as the Messiah in the line of David and Osiris-Dionysus the Son of God.
- In the gospels Jesus makes it clear that he is really the dying and resurrecting Son of God, not the expected Jewish Messiah.
- Although he conforms to Jewish expectations about the Messiah as much as possible, by his death and resurrection Jesus is shown to actually be Osiris-Dionysus.
- As well as Pagan mythological motifs, the Jesus story draws on Jewish mythological motifs, especially from the story of the Exodus.
- The Jesus story draws on concepts and images developed in Jewish intertestamental literature



that synthesize Jewish and Pagan ideas.

- In some texts the name Jesus has simply been added to turn pre-Christian treatises into Christian documents.
- The Jewish Messiah was expected to be a historical figure, which meant that the Jesus story would have to be cast in a historical setting.
- The creators of the Jesus Mysteries used the time and place chosen as the setting for Jesus' life to encode symbolic messages. The time of Jesus' birth links him to the birth of the New Age of Pisces and brings him into conflict immediately with the hated King Herod and the Romans. The time of his death brings him into conflict with the particularly loathed Roman official Pontius Pilate.
- In 70 CE the Romans laid waste to Jerusalem, fueling the Jews' desperate desire for a savior. This crisis put external pressure on the historicization process of the Jesus story and produced the Gospel of Mark from the mystical timeless Christ preached by Paul.
- The Jesus Mysteries presented to Jews a mystical Messiah as an alternative to all the fundamentalist zealot Messiahs causing havoc in Judea at the time.
- Although transforming the Jewish Messiah into Osiris-Dionysus in order to introduce the Pagan godman to the Jews was a clever idea, it didn't work. The Jesus Mysteries were rejected by Jews but embraced by Pagans as a new Mystery cult.
- After 70 CE Jews with knowledge only of the Outer Mysteries of Christianity were spread around the Roman Empire as slaves and refugees. Those in the West, cut off from the masters of the Gnosis in the East, developed a new religion, based only on the Outer Mysteries, which preached a historical Jesus.
- The original Jesus Mysteries, now called Gnosticism, continued to flourish in the East.
- By the middle of the second century the Gnostics, who had created the Jesus story in the first place, were being attacked by Literalist Christians as heretics who had perverted genuine Christianity.

In synthesizing the perennial myth of the dying and resurrecting godman with Jewish expectations of a historical Messiah the creators of the Jewish Mysteries took an unprecedented step, the outcome of which they could never have guessed. And yet, upon analysis, the end was already there in the beginning. The Messiah was expected to be a historical, not a mythical, savior. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Jesus story would have to develop a quasi-historical setting. And so it did. What had started as a timeless myth encoding perennial teachings:

- That the very Spirit of Life, the very life of God, had come to tabernacle in matter...flesh...in mankind...as understood as the descent of the soul into matter
- That God, the Creator, implanted His presence and Divine life within in mankind through birth
- That God, the Sustainer, gave the gift of man's existence in the realm of real time in the physical realm
- That God, the Destroyer, would bring all things to end in death and decay
- That God, the Supreme Architect, establish this pattern of "birth, life, and death" forever and that there is life beyond death

This metaphysical and mystery of God's pattern of "birth, life, death, and rebirth", previously understood through "allegory" and "myths" like the myths Osiris and Dionysus among the Gentiles, now appeared to be a historical account of a once-only event in time that occurred in Israel. And whereas before it was the myth of the cycle of life, "birth, life, death, and rebirth", as told among the Gentiles, is now told through the eyes of Judaism and its "Christ - Messiah." From this point it was unavoidable that sooner or later it would be interpreted as historical fact. Once it was, a whole new type of religion came into being-a religion based on history not myth, on blind faith in supposed events rather than on a mystical understanding of mythical allegories, a religion of the Outer Mysteries

**without the Inner Mysteries, of form without content, of belief without Knowledge.**

**One final part of the puzzle was left for us to ponder.**

**Answer for yourself:** Why was it that the Christianity that eventually came to dominate the world was not the grand and ancient mysticism of the Gnostics, but the narrow authoritarianism of the Literalists?

**To get this answer we will have to examine Marcion's First New Testament as compared with Rome's Second New Testament. In so doing we will detect the key additions of a "fleshy" Christ made to the Jesus Myth by Rome when they refuted the Gnostic First New Testament which taught an "allegory" of the Christ and Jesus. Failure to understand and see these changes prevent us from knowing the truth about the New Testament and this only further misleads the reader to interpret "the Christ" literally instead of "allegorically" as had the earliest Christians. It is to such a task and study we now turn.**





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# THE GNOTIC EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THE LATER LITERALISTS OF ROMAN CHRISTIANITY

For many students Gnosticism will be a new religious concept let alone an allegorical understanding applied to the deeper things of God. But that is just what the early Christians were all about. If we every hope to come to an understanding of the earliest Christians and what they "believed" then we need to think in a new way and get familiar with new terms. Most of you are familiar with classifying people according to the religion to which they are affiliated -Pagan, Jew, Christian, Muslim, and so forth. But we need to loop a little deeper if we might for such "generic" terms are not descriptive enough and fail to reveal a more significant classification of religious believers, which categorizes individuals according to spiritual understanding rather than religious tradition.

After many, many years of study I finally saw the "big" picture. All religious movements from the beginning of time could be classified in two basic ways:

- **Gnosticism...with an allegorical understanding of the texts and revelation**
- **Literalism...with a literal understanding of the texts and revelation**

Of course there are many peoples somewhere between these two basic classifications and overlaps of both hermeneutics and interpretations exist but understand that these are the two basic ways to understand religious literature.

What I found surprising when analyzing these different approaches to religions is that the Gnostics, even from different religious traditions, have far more in common with each other than they do with Literalists within their own tradition. This applies to both Jewish and Gentile Gnostics which share many beliefs in common. Whilst Literalists from different religions clearly hold conflicting beliefs, Gnostics from all traditions use different conceptual vocabularies to articulate a common understanding of God and the Cosmos (Cosmology). Now it is not all that simple for there is disagreement and differences of interpretation within Gnosticism but the parallels greatly outweigh the differences. Different religious Gnostic schools argue at times quite heatedly between each other, but these differences are minor compared to their shared essential perspective. Gnostics need to be understood as essentially parts of one evolving tradition, whatever their race or culture. Only by uniting Jewish and Christian Gnosticism with its Pagan predecessor can any sense be made of the elaborate allegorical Gnostic mythology of the Nag Hammadi library. By a reverse process much new insights and information can also be gleaned about what took place in the Egyptian Mysteries down through history as assimilated into other nations. We must be careful not to "read into" Gnosticism our predeveloped penchant for "literalism;" for in so doing we read into these Gnostic texts of the earliest Christians religious concepts they never believed nor intended to teach.

The goal of Gnostic spirituality is Gnosis, or Knowledge of Truth. In this site we will use the term "Gnostics", meaning ""Knowers" of the secret knowledge and enlightenment. You can find this concepts in Christianity, paganism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and a host of other religions. This again attest to the evolution of one evolving religious tradition from the beginning of time.

## THE ANCIENT DICHOTOMY

- Gnostics interpret the stories and teachings of their spiritual tradition as signposts pointing beyond words altogether to the mystical experience of the ineffable Mystery. Literalists, on the other hand, believe their scriptures are actually the words of God. They take their teachings, stories and initiation myths to be factual history. They focus on the words as a *literal* expression of the Truth. Hence we have chosen to call them "Literalists".
- Gnostics are concerned with the inner essence of their tradition. Literalists associate their faith with its outward manifestations: sacred symbols, scriptures, rituals, ecclesiastical leaders, and so on. Gnostics see themselves as being on a spiritual journey of personal transformation. Literalists see themselves as fulfilling a divinely ordained obligation to practise particular religious customs as a part of their national or cultural identity.
- Literalists believe that their particular spiritual tradition is different from all others and has a unique claim on the Truth. They obsessively formulate dogmas which define membership of their particular cult. They are prepared to enforce their opinions and silence those who dissent, justifying their actions by claiming that they are fulfilling God's will. Gnostics, on the other hand, are free spirits who question the presuppositions of their own culture. They follow their hearts, not the herd. They are consumed by their private quest for enlightenment, not by the goal of recruiting more adherents to a religion.
- Gnostics wish to free themselves from the limitations of their personal and cultural identities and experience the oneness of all things. They therefore have no reluctance in adopting the wisdom of other traditions if it adds something to their own. Literalists use religion to sustain their personal and cultural identity by defining themselves in opposition to others. This inevitably leads to disputes with those outside their particular cult. It is Literalists who fight wars of religion with Literalists from other traditions, each claiming that God is on their side. Literalists' enmity also extends to Gnostics within their own tradition who question their bigotry. Most spiritual traditions have a tragic history of the brutal oppression of Gnostics by intolerant Literalists. Interestingly, it is never the other way around.

If we think in these rather simplistic terms we can better understand the origins of Christianity much more accurately. We know Christianity certainly adopted many elements from Judaism, as is generally accepted. It was also heavily influenced by Paganism, as is being increasingly realized. But it is best conceived as a product of neither and a reaction against both (Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess, 2001, p. 9-10).





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# THE THERAPEUTAE AND THE ESSENES AS THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS

**Answer for yourself:** Could it just be that the original Christians were a part of a divergent Gnostic tradition that prospered across the whole of the Mediterranean and did so possessing a common mystical philosophy and a common aversion to an imposed literalist religion? That is exactly what we find thanks to the benefits of archeology over the last centuries which has brought many early Christian documents to light as well as other archeological finds that reveal this fact.

The implications of the answer to the above question are not only striking but potentially lethal to the much accepted view and tradition of Roman Christianity and its "literalistic" approach to the Jewish Scriptures today.

Many scholars will tell us that in reality there were no "original" Christianity because history reveals to us upon study the emergence of a continuous movement of Gnostic believers from different cultures which all producing their own unique variations of a common religious beliefs system. Amongst some Jewish Gnostics a school developed which synthesized Jewish and Pagan mythology to produce distinctive new myths. We saw this clearly with Philo in previous articles as we traced the synthesis of Greek philosophy, Pagan Mysteries, and Judaism into a unique religious synthesis which is better known as Jewish Gnosticism. But underneath this "Jewish flavor" is a common mystical understanding of God handed down since the beginning of time. We find the earliest, simplest, and most profound expressions of God in Egypt where almost all of our later Judeo-Christians religious "doctrines" have come.

On the subject of the origin of Christianity, Saint Augustine wrote:- ***“For the thing itself which is now called the Christian religion, was known to the ancients, and was not wanting at any time from the beginning of the human race until the time that Christ came in the flesh, from whence the true religion, that had existed previously, began to be called Christian, and this in our day is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received the name”.***

**Answer for yourself:** Did you see that this prominent Church Father stated what I am saying; namely that what evolved into the Christian religion and doctrines could be found at the beginning of the human race?

Born in AD 354, Saint Augustine was one of the early Christian fathers. This opinion of Saint Augustine was also the opinion of Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, born in Palestine in AD 265, who said:- ***“Those ancient Therapeutae were Christians and their writings were our gospels and epistles”, and “the religion published by Jesus Christ to all nations is neither new nor strange”, expressing the view that what is called Christianity was borrowed from the Therapeutae, or Essenes, a view held also by other outstanding men of the early Christian Church.***

**These Therapeutae were known under the name of the Essenes, or healers, and they had their origin in Egypt.** It was there that the Essenes principally dwelt for over two hundred years before the time of Jesus. Their centre was Alexandria, site of the world's theological university, where the wisdom of the time was

focused in those days, and where there was the greatest library in the ancient world.

**Answer for yourself:** So what is the problem? It is imperative that these earliest "dogmas" and "doctrines" concerning the Creator be understood correctly; namely, the same was that those who gave them to us understood and taught them. The sad fact is that we don't have today the same meanings as not only held by the Ancients but the early Christians as well concerning this earliest understanding of God and His "Christ." We must recover these truths.

**In retrospect we can see that this emergence of Jewish Gnostic "believers" was the beginnings of what we now call "Christianity".**

Today scholars are somewhat divided in opinions; but many hold that these **proto-Christians were a group of believers called the Therapeutae and Essenes**, who are described by the Jewish Gnostic Philo, himself probably an initiate of the Therapeutae, **as two parts of a single school of philosophy**.

Philo paints the Therapeutae and Essenes as the Jewish equivalent of the active and contemplative division found in the many earlier Pagan schools. The community founded by Pythagoras recognized two order of followers: those who came to hear the teachings and those who committed themselves and their world good to the community.

**Answer for yourself:** Were the earliest Christian believers related to the Therapeutae-Essenes?

*Acts 2:42-45 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. (KJV)*

*Acts 4:32 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (KJV)*

These examples just might be circumstantial so lets keep studying to make sure.

The world these Gnostic Therapeutae and Essenes populated was governed by cosmopolitan Pagan civilizations which had been trading, conquering and **synthesizing with each other for centuries**. It would only be a few decades later that the empire of Alexander the Great will transform this ancient world into basically one culture and one religion. Along with this Greek became the international language which only facilitates such a "synthesis" of Greek ideas into existing world cultures and religions. **We call this Hellenism!** Pagan, Jewish and Christian Gnostics all wrote in Greek, thus making their religious ideas easily available to each other and thus enabling an burst of creative assimilation of religious ideas. **It was an ideal environment for Gnosticism to flourish.**

**By the first century C.E. , just one hundred or so years before the emergence of the Jesus Myth in the New Testament, huge numbers of Jews in Judaea and throughout the Mediterranean were fully integrated into sophisticated Pagan society, none more so than Jewish Gnostics, such as the Therapeutae.** Philo writes of being part of an international fellowship of Gnostic philosophers who, "although comparatively few in number, keep alive the covered spark of wisdom secretly throughout the cities of the world".

**Jewish Gnostics claimed to be inheritors of secret mystical teachings passed down from their own great Gnostic master, Moses.** (Philo, De Sept, 3.4, quoted in W. Kingsland, The Gnosis, 1937, p.106).

**Answer for yourself:** Is this piece of information a reinforcement that the earliest concepts and understanding of



God originated with Egypt? Yes it is! But then again we must interpret this ancient Egyptian literature correctly if we ever hope to understand God as they did. **This I promise you will take time but when you see it you will be moved in your Spirit beyond belief; I was. It is so simple, so beautiful, and so profound; thereby helping cut out erroneous theology that will later develop over the millennia due to misinterpretation or pure invention!**

These teachings of Jewish Gnosticism (coming from Egypt) were so similar to those of Pagan Gnosticism that many Jews claimed that the great Pagan philosophers had originally received their wisdom from Moses. This condition continued into the Middle Ages. The Zohar, believed written by Moses de Leon in 1305 C.E., claimed to draw on the secret teachings of Simeon Ben Yohai, a rabbi of Galilee in the second century C.E., which were in turn said to have been drawn from the hidden wisdom of Moses. The medieval flowering of Kabbalah in the south of France in the 13th century was inspired by Jewish Gnostic tradition that had somehow survived from the first centuries (G. Scholem, Origins Of The Kabbalah, 1987). This belief encouraged Jews to enthusiastically embrace the philosophy and mythology of the Pagan Gnostics to augment their own tradition, producing a Miarge number of spiritual treatises which synthesized Pagan and Jewish motifs.

**The spirituality of the Therapeutae and Essenes is an example of this mixture of Jewish and Pagan Gnosticism.** As well as being **followers of their own Jewish master Moses**, they were also **followers of the great Pagan philosopher Pythagoras**, whose disciples had set up communities throughout the Mediterranean world. The Jewish historian Josephus informs us that the Essenes are comparable to the Pythagoreans (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 15.371). In creating the Gnostic Jesus Myth these Therapeutae-Essenes drew upon inter-testamental literature which had already been synthesized from Pagan and Jewish mythological motifs. These inter-testamental texts not only echo the Pagan Mysteries but also prefigures Christianity and by so doing forms a bridge between the two. For example motifs that prefigure Christianity are found in the Sibylline Oracles which look forward to the coming of "the Christ" and the Books of Enoch which anticipate the arrival of the "Son of Man" - a title that will be used to define Jesus in the New Testament.

Philo, himself known as "the Pythagorean" (Josephus, The Jewish War, 2.8.10). Philo, himself a Pythagorean, describes the Therapeutae as practising "the contemplative life", which was a way of describing Pythagoreans (Clement of Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria, 1919, 1.15.72 and 2.19.100). Philo tells us their wisdom stems from Greece and that "this kind exists in many places in the inhabited world". The "contemplative life" is a term used to describe the life lived in the Pythagorean communities.

Following the practice of the **Cynic school of Pagan Gnosticism**, these **Jewish Gnostics called their spiritual tradition simply "the Way"** - a term also adopted by the original Christians. "The Way" was a phrase used by Essenes, Cynics, and Christians to describe their faith (A. Ellegard, Jesus: One Hundred Years Before Christ, 1999, p. 167).

**Acts 9:2 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. (KJV)**

**Answer for yourself:** Are these Therapeuate-Essene-Pythagorean-Jews the earliest Christians we read about in the Book of Acts? It sure would appear so!

**Partly due to Philo's writings, the fourth-century Christian Literalist historian Eusebius saw so many similarities between the Way of the Therapeutae and the Christian Way that he claimed the Therapeutae were amongst the first followers of Christ.**

**Answer for yourself:** But when did Philo write of these Therapeutae? Before or after Jesus of the New Testament times?

Philo's description of the Therapeutae was written before the time that Jesus is supposed to have been teaching, so Philo is clearly **NOT** writing about disciples of an historical Jesus or a historical Messiah, as Eusebius

believed. Ironically, Eusebius was probably right nevertheless, albeit in an entirely different way from how he intended. The Essenes and Therapeutae did not follow Jesus. They created him!

The idea of some sect "making up" the Jesus myth may seem strange today, but this is because we no longer think of myths in the same way as our ancestors did. To us myths are irrelevant fantasies, but the ancients regarded "myths" as profound allegories encoding mystical teachings. Mythical motifs represented philosophical principles. They were an archetypal vocabulary with which to think. Creating new myths was a way of exploring new ideas.

Reworking old myths and syncretizing them to create new ones was a major preoccupation of the Gnostics. Philo tells us that the Therapeutae were devoted to "philosophizing and interpreting their ancestral scriptures allegorically, for they think that the words of the literal meaning are symbols of a hidden nature which is made plain only by the undermeaning" (Philo, *De Sept*, 3.4, quoted in W. Kingsland, *The Gnosis*, 1937, p. 28). Imaginative mythologizing is also what the later Christian Gnostics specialized in. One of their critics condemns them for using "allegorical interpretation" to freely "recompose" Jewish scriptures and "Greek epic mythology" (Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 26.1.4), which are precisely the two sources used to create the myths of Jesus and the Goddess.

## A SHORT LOOK AT THE ESSENES

These Therapeutae were known under the name of the Essenes, or healers, and they had their origin in Egypt. It was there that the Essenes principally dwelt for over two hundred years before the time of Jesus. Their centre was Alexandria, site of the world's theological university, where the wisdom of the time was focused in those days, and where there was the greatest library in the ancient world.

The Essenes were taught the art of healing at the University of Alexandria, which had a special medical school, and along with this art of healing, certain mystical rites were observed. Their belief in the immortality of the soul came from the influence of Greek philosophy. They were the custodians of the teachings followed for hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, which came to be incorporated in the New Testament at a much later date. Alexandria should be looked upon as the birthplace of Christianity, as there centered all the knowledge of the world's various religions, out of which developed the modern religion.

According to Philo, the famous Jewish author, who lived at the time of Jesus, the Essenes were philosophers and ascetics, as well as healers. They divested themselves of all worldly goods, and thus relieved themselves of all worldly cares. Their outlook on life can be summed up in the words "sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor", and "lay not up treasures on Earth, but rather in Heaven, where moth and rust cannot corrupt". The teachings of Jesus, and the teachings of the Essenes, are remarkably alike, and the similarity of many of the sayings found in the Gospels, to those of the Essenes, is striking. The teachings of Jesus, with regard to this world and the next, can be traced back to Essene sources.

What is known as the Sermon on the Mount can be traced to the same sources; in fact the Sermon is just a stringing together of quotations from the Psalms, Proverbs and other Jewish literature, all of which were well known to this sect. As a community they were equal as far as worldly goods were concerned, and none exercised authority over the other, all rendering mutual service to the community. The Essenes strove to live lives of purity and holiness, sacrificing this world's pleasures for the happiness of the world to come. They lived a monastic life.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, the Jewish race was divided into Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, and most Jews belonged to one or other of these sects. Jesus constantly rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees, but never the Essenes, the probable reason being that he had studied under them, and his father was most definitely a member of the sect.



Professor Dr. Ginsburg, the well-known Jewish scholar, who in 1870 was appointed one of the first members of the committee for the revision of the English version of the Old Testament, contributed a comprehensive article on the relationship of Essenism to Christianity, in Kitto's Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature. Therein he shows that what Jesus is reported to have taught, the Essenes taught before him. The Encyclopedia Britannica, under "The Essenes", also gives a detailed account of this sect, and there are various other authorities on the subject. Gibbon was of the opinion that early Christianity, before it became surrounded by the myths, legends, doctrines and ceremonials of other religions, was just a new name given to the teachings of Essenism.

**Answer for yourself:** Whence came this holy brotherhood? They can be traced first from Judea to Egypt, and from Egypt to India. In other words the Essenes were in all probability the Western offshoot of the followers of Buddha, and that Prince Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as The Buddha, was probably the source whence sprang the teachings of the Essenes.

Beginning with the Therapeutae and Essenes in the first century BCE, a body of specifically Christian mythology gradually evolved, passing through many stages and revisions, with different Christian schools developing their own myths or their own versions of common myths. Essentially, all of these myths explore two questions which are fundamental to the human predicament: how did we get into this mess and how do we get out of it"! (T. Freke and Peter Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess, 2001, p.13). This is pure Gnosticism in its zenith!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXODUS ALLEGORY FOR CHRISTIAN GNOSTICISM

Jewish Gnostics believed that answers to these questions dealing with the creation and the presence of evil in the world and in mankind were encoded in two allegorical myths from the Books of Moses: Genesis and Exodus:

Genesis means "origination". The Book of Genesis was understood by these earliest Gnostic Christians as encoding teachings about the descent of the soul into physical incarnation.

*Exodus* means "the way out". It was seen as encoding teachings about the initiate's spiritual path back to God.

At the very heart of the Egyptian Mysteries and the Pagan Mysteries was a dramatization of the descent and return of the soul and so it is no surprise that the Jewish Philosophers seized on Genesis and Exodus as the starting point for the allegorization of their sacred texts. Whether the Pentateuch was meant to be an allegory from its first inception is not known, but the failure of historians to find historical evidence for most of the events portrayed in it suggest that it might have been. Whatever its origin, the allegorization of the Exodus enabled Hellenistic Jewish scholars to prove, at least to their own satisfaction, that the Pagan Mysteries had in fact been inspired by Mosaic traditions. This should later provide justification for the staggering degree of syncretism found in Philo (T. Freke and Peter Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess, 2001, p. 114).

The original Christians synthesized these Jewish myths with Pagan myths which also encoded Gnostic teachings about the fall and redemption of the soul to create their own myth cycle which explained both the "descent" and the "return". The Christian myth of descent or origination is a synthesis and elaboration of the Jewish *Genesis* myth and *Timaeus*, a Pythagorean treatise by the Pagan Gnostic Plato. Plato's *Timaeus*, the most mystical of all Plato's dialogues, was composed from Pythagorean texts brought from a Pythagorean of southern Italy called Timaeus. The influence of this text upon Gnostic speculation was profound. This formation of the gnostic myth ultimately drew on Platonist interpretations of the myth of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*, as combined with the Book of Genesis (B. Layton, The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age, 1987, p. 7-8). In his treatise *On the Creation of the World* Philo argues that, understood allegorically, these two works

encode the same doctrines (Ibid.).

The Christian myth of the "return" is a powerful allegory designed to guide us through the stages of initiation which lead to Gnosis. It was created by synthesizing the Jewish myth of *Exodus* with Pagan myths of the dying and resurrecting Godman Osiris-Dionysus. Originally a simple and abstract myth, it was revised and embellished over the course of the first and second centuries CE to become the most influential myth ever created: the Jesus story.

It is not time we look at this Exodus allegory as Christian Gnostics understood it and then for the parallels to the Jesus Myth of the New Testament. Let us continue.





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## WERE THE ESSENES THE FORERUNNERS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS?

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered at a place known today as Qumran (pronounced koomrahn), an Arabic name without any certain meaning.

**Answer for yourself:** What is the significance of Qumran and why did the Essenes make this their "home"?

**Answer for yourself:** Did Qumran hold memories of Israel's previous "salvations" by God in their historic past? You bet it did! Let me explain.

It is an ancient site, one of the "cities of the wilderness" mentioned in the Book of Joshua. Let us never forget that the name **"Joshua" in Hebrew means "Jehovah/Yahweh is Salvation"** to begin with. John Allegro believes that the mysterious people of the Scrolls purposely came to locate their community upon an earlier Israelite settlement of biblical prominence known once as the city of *Secacah* (John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth*, New York, Prometheus Books, 1984, p. 63-64). A few miles to the north of the present Qumran is the ancient site of Jericho and of the fords where Joshua, son of Nun, led the people of Israel across the river Jordan where the water parted, repeating after a fashion the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea initiated by Moses. As the Red Sea had parted for Moses, so the Jordan stopped in its flow for Joshua in order to permit the crossing of the Jews—at least so all believers held. **The region at and around Qumran was hallowed by a sacred past. It was a place where miracles happened, where the God of Israel intervened in the course of nature to show His favor to the children of His covenant.**

**Answer for yourself:** What other events are connected with Qumran that circulated in the minds of the Jews and that possibly played a role in their later "theologies"?

Divine miracles are not the only events whereby this region is remembered. **Qumran is also noted for Divine judgment!** The plain clearly visible from Qumran is the very one where, under a dreadful hail of fire and brimstone, the unhappy populace of Sodom and Gomorrah found their last, sad resting place. Even more significantly, the Rift Valley in the immediate vicinity of Qumran was traditionally believed to contain the Abyss of Judgement wherein the rebel angels with their chief, *Azazel*, were cast by God in order to languish until the day of the final judgment. Such apocryphal books as those of Enoch and Jubilees (both of which were favorite reading of the Essenes of Qumran) outline an entire dark myth dealing with Azazel and his angelic host, who intermarried with humans and became the forebears of a race mighty in knowledge and magical skills. These beings, at times called **Watchers** and **Rephaim (related to the Hebrew verb *rapha*, to heal), were regarded by at least some of the People of the Scrolls as the spiritual ancestors of their own tradition, which was popularly called *Essene*, related to healers and physicians.**

**Answer for yourself:** Where do we find our first clue that the Essenes are the spiritual forefathers of the later Gnostic Christians?

The key is these "Watchers" and "Rephaim". The name refers to a race of semi-divine heroes, giants, who once

lived in Canaan. These were the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men (Gen. 6:4). They are commonly known as an ancient race of giants, whose land was promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:20). They lived in Ashteroth Karnaim (Genesis 14:5) and later, to the east of the Jordan in Bashan, and were associated with the Perizites and the Hivites. Part of the lands of the Rephaim was given to the descendants of Lot (Deuteronomy 2:20). Og, the giant reputed to be over ten feet (3m) tall, was said to be one of the survivors of the Rephaim (Deuteronomy 3:11), and lived in Rabbah in Ammon (now the capital of Jordan). It is believed that they originated as the offspring of the Elohim and their creation "homo sapiens" from "homo erectus". That is a story in itself; believe me and there is solid evidence that this happened. But that is a study for another day.

**What is important for our current study is that sometime after the Essenes, the Gnostics of Nag Hammadi also viewed themselves as spiritual kin of both the rebellious inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and, at least by implication, of the Watchers/Rephaim as well.** The last two comments should have really gotten our attention. The mention of "giants" and "Elohim's offspring" and the rebellion of them as well as the judgment of such rebellious ones previously at Sodom and Gomorrah should speak to us that the **very locale of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and with it the headquarters of the most famous Essene community known, is a picture of an long existing rebellious tradition that stands opposed to orthodox establishments of doctrine and along with that is devoted to secret knowledge and practices.** Of special note is now the idea of "secret knowledge" or "gnosis"; **main religious tenants of the later Gnostic Christians who we are currently seeing were the Essenes of old.**

Turning from the place to the people themselves, we must note that the Dead Sea Scrolls were by no means the first evidence of the existence of the Essenes. The Roman writer Pliny the Elder, the historian Josephus, as well as the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria have left us much testimony concerning those whom they called Essenes. The Greek word *Essenoi* is of uncertain derivation, but it is related by scholars to the Hebrew *Asah* (he acted), *Hazah* (he saw visions), as well as to the Aramaic *Hasaya* (pious) and **Asa (he healed).**

The modern Talmudic Hebrew word **Hasid (pious) may also be reckoned among the cognate words.** We may thus speculate that they were people of action, visionaries, persons distinguished by extraordinary piety, and above all, **individuals preoccupied with healing, for which reason (especially in Egypt) they were also frequently called Therapeutae, meaning physicians or healers.**

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this important? We just made the link with Egypt where it is recorded the Elohim walked among men (the Elohim creation of Genesis 2). What we often fail to see is that there is two creation accounts in Genesis [Genesis chapter one is by Yahweh, the Ultimate Creator, and a second creation by the Elohim in Genesis chapter 2]. Egypt records for us much concerning this. **But the words linking them with "healing" and "healers" speak to us about a possible similar identity going all the way back to Egypt (the Essenes were a branch or even identical with the Therapeutae of Egypt) where this secret "gnosis" was treasured and often involved healing.** While the early descriptions of these descendents of these "Watchers/Rephaim", the Essenes, stressed asceticism and piety, the find of the Scrolls brought into increasing view their rebelliousness and heterodoxy as was the case with their forefathers.

For centuries the world of scholars viewed the Essenes as a numerically small (Pliny gave their number as around 4,000), **quietist, and pacifist movement,** desperately concerned with purity in all forms-celibate, ascetic, given to dietary eccentricities, and utterly unworldly and otherworldly in outlook and practice. Along with these notions went also the acceptance of the hyperorthodoxy and strict legalism imputed to the Essenes, who thus were made out to be merely an extremely orthodox and ascetic group of Jews whose doctrines and actions were in conformity with mainstream Judaism as known throughout history. But this picture of the Essenes is brought into serious question today by the picture presented of them from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. **The picture emerging from the Scrolls is, to say the least, very different from this earlier view of the Essene character. It appears from today's study that these Essenes were far from being a quietist, and pacifist movement!**



## THE ESSENE-ZEALOT-GNOSTIC CHRISTIAN LINK

After the discovery of the Scrolls a good deal of learned discussion was carried on in scholarly quarters about whether the authors of the documents were Essenes or whether they might have been what were called Zealots. As is known, in the years A.D. 66-70 a great revolt took place in Israel that swept through the country and that in AD. 70 led to the final destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and the subsequent abolishing of the Jewish homeland, which was not to be reestablished until the middle of the twentieth century. The instigators of this disastrous uprising were the Zealots, who came to look upon the Roman occupying forces as the embodiment of cosmic evil and upon themselves as the army of light destined to rid Israel and the world of the demonic host embodied in the power of imperial Rome. The Scrolls of the Essenes (at least in part) propound a warlike mythos very similar to that espoused by the Zealots. In one, *The Sons of Light*, led by a princely Messiah and easily identifiable as the Essenes themselves, would assume a leading role in the struggle against the Children of Darkness, who in turn are led by the prince of darkness, Belial, or the devil. This thoroughly dualistic document clearly established the People of the Scrolls as being far removed from the pacifist image attributed to them earlier.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is the dualistic document *The Sons of Light* so important for our study of these Essenes, the Zealots (who again made up much of the following of Jesus in the New Testament) and Gnostic Christianity?

Simply because the depiction of Rome as the embodiment of a cosmic evil to which the army of light was to depose and rid Israel of these demonic hosts is the same scenario we find in both the mythos of the Zealots and the Essenes as well as Gnostic Christianity. Simply stated this is dualism at its zenith. This dualistic myth reminds the reader of the many later dualistic myths of the Gnostic and Manichaeans (also Gnostics) which speak of the same struggle of the knowers against the host of evil, led by the archon (ruler) of darkness. These are basically the same as what we find with the earlier Essenes.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this so important? This is the first indications of a Gnostic or at least Proto-Gnostic tradition within Hellenistic Judaism. No less an authority than the universally respected scholar R. Bultmann was prompted by the evidence of the Scrolls to write: *"a pre-Christian Judaism of Gnostic character* which hitherto could only be inferred from later sources *is now attested to by the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls* (R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1951, p. 361).

It has been said by one of the most insightful translators of the Scrolls, Theodor H. Gaster (in his work *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation*), that the Scrolls are essentially mystical documents and that the experiences spoken of in the document called the Scroll of Hymns are genuine mystical experiences. The "wondrous mysteries" of God revealed to the authors of the Scrolls according to their testimony remind one of similar mysteries and mystical experiences alluded to and documented in various Gnostic scriptures, notably The Treatise of the Eighth and the Ninth as well as others of the Nag Hammadi collection. This is another similarity connecting the Essenes with the later Gnostic Christians since we find such similarities in their religious theologies. It is more than likely that the Essenic authors of the Scrolls, not unlike the Gnostic authors of the Nag Hammadi codices, were partakers of visions and revelations of an esoteric nature and that the content of the Scrolls could be viewed as possessing an inner, hidden meaning or code. The Essenes were in fact inclined to employ codes, as the discovery of the so-called *Taxo-Asaph* disguise by way of the use of the *Atbash* cipher proves.

As C. G. Jung repeatedly pointed out, the Gnostic documents, including those of Nag Hammadi, were **NOT** based on dogmatic or philosophical considerations but contained primary revelations from the deepest strata of the human psyche. Similarly, the latest research seems to reveal that at least a large portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls also originates in such direct, firsthand mystical experiences partaken of by the Essene mystics of the



**Qumran community. The Gnostics of the later period did not feel it necessary to disguise in code and cipher the visionary nature of their inspiration as had their spiritual forefathers...the Essenes. An excellent example of such a Gnostic description of mystic vision is to be found in a scripture referred to earlier, *The Treatise of the Eight and the Ninth*:**

*How shall I describe the All! I see another Nous [spiritual soul] who moves the soul. I see one who speaks to me through a holy sleep. Thou givest me strength. I see myself! I am willing to discourse! I am overcome with a trembling! I have found the origin of the Power above all powers, which has no origin! I see a wellspring bubbling up with life! . . I have seen what discourse cannot reveal, for the entire Eighth, O my son, with the souls therein and the angels are singing in silence. But I, the Nous, understand* (The Eight Reveals The Ninth: A New Hermetic Initiation Discourse/Tractate 6. Nag Hammadi Codes VI/Lewis S Keizer, trans., (Seaside. Ca: Academy of Arts and Humanities, 1974), pp. 98-99).

While admitting that "wondrous mysteries" have been revealed to them, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls utilize metaphors and imagery from nature to indicate their own mystical and secret experiences. Thus we read in the *Thanksgiving Hymns* of the Scrolls:

*But Thou, O my God, hast put into my mouth as showers of early rain for all who thirst and a spring of living waters. . . . Suddenly they shall gush forth from the secret hiding places. . .* (Thanksgiving Hymns, Col. VIII)

In the same collection of hymns (possibly written by the mysterious Teacher of Righteousness himself), the image of a variety of trees is used to denote the Essenes themselves. These "trees" are nourished by the living waters that gush forth from the **secret places of God's secret wisdom**, and among them prominently mentioned is the myrtle, **the name for which in Aramaic, assaya, is virtually identical with the word for healing, from which one of the popular names of the Essenes derives. Linguistic ciphers and other metaphors are thus used by the People of the Scrolls to both reveal and conceal their esoteric character.**

## WHO AND WHAT WERE THESE ESSENES?

Their outer history is fairly quickly recounted. About a century and a half prior to time given in the New Testament for the supposed birth of Jesus, a non-Jewish king named Antiochus Epiphanes decided to impose a pagan form of religion on the land of the Jews. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus a revolution broke out, which by the year 142 B.C. came to establish the religious and political freedom of the Jewish people. Among the followers of the revolutionary leaders were many "pious ones," i.e., Hasidim or Essenes, who adhered to an alternative form of mystical spirituality and whose spiritual traditions went back a long time in Jewish history. The aftermath of the revolution of the Maccabees, however, created a permanent rift between these pious mystics and the religious-political establishment in Jerusalem. The Hasmonean royal family established by the revolution had done a deed that the Essenes considered unforgivable: The kings drove from their sacred seat of the high priesthood of the Temple the members of the tribe of *Zadok*, who had held this office for some eight centuries, ever since the reign of King Solomon. The new high priests became none other than the kings of the new dynasty themselves. This was the state of affairs that the Essenes could not accept. They packed up their belongings and removed themselves from the jurisdiction of the newly installed politician-high priests by moving into the mysterious area of Qumran, there to practice their special form of religious purity, conduct secret rites, converse with angels and demons, and plot the overthrow of the establishment of those whom they ever after called "the wicked priests."

From this time on the Essenes of Qumran became openly declared heretics. Their teacher, a messianic figure whose personal name they never mentioned and to whom their literature always refers as the "Teacher of Righteousness." was slain by the royal and priestly tyranny around the year 100 B.C. This cruel act, which, as we shall see, shows many startling similarities with the execution of Jesus a century and some years later,



embittered the People of the Scrolls even further. From then on they engaged in grand apocalyptic tasks of mythmaking and prophesied the dawning of a new age wherein the sons of light would fight a great war with the sons of darkness, which would lead to the establishment of a new kingdom of light and righteousness under the inspiration of the pious Essenes themselves. For decade upon decade the holy heretics brooded in their rock-hewn dwellings and labyrinthine caverns and prepared for the coming of the new age of light. It was within this period of sad and irate introspection that they wrote and copied their numerous heterodox scriptures, many of which became known nearly two millennia later as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Hasmonean kings were finally brought to their downfall by the power of Rome in alliance with the non-Jewish dynasty of Herod. The "evil priests" no longer ruled in Jerusalem, their place having been taken by a foreign king supervised by a Roman governor. While the chief antagonists of the Essenes were eliminated conditions in the lands of Judea were still not to their liking. Many probably drifted back to the towns and hamlets of their ancestral land, some even found refuge in Jerusalem, the hated seat of the usurping establishments of throne and altar. Yet others traveled to distant regions, notably the land of mystery and magic called Egypt, where the equally heretical Jew Philo of Alexandria was to call them *Therapeutae*, or healers. But the majority in all likelihood continued to hold out in the mountains and caves of Qumran, awaiting the new age of a Messiah who would establish the long-awaited kingdom of light that had eluded the expectations of the pious ones. By the year A.D. 1 when an obscure infant was allegedly born in Bethlehem, whose brief career seemed to be patterned so closely on that of their Teacher of Righteousness, the People of the Scrolls were inwardly ready for at least certain elements of the new covenant which was proclaimed some years later by the followers of the mysterious Rabbi Yeshua, better known by his Latin name, Jesus. It is here, in the story of Jesus Christ of the New Testament, that the content of the Scrolls sheds much new and valuable light on the Essene impact on the shaping of Christianity, and beyond that, on the shaping of a certain creative heterodox variety of Christianity, known as Gnosticism. The Scrolls from Qumran confirmed most of the already available information about the Essenes, but added much invaluable material in the form of teachings concerning the messianic warrior prince expected by the People of the Scrolls. This is how John Allegro characterizes the expected Essene Messiah of the Scrolls:

*This charismatic leader of the future, born of the lineage of the famous King David, would establish a new world order where the will of God reigned supreme. Such a blessed state could only come about after wars and bloody revolution in which the "Anointed". . . would personally lead the forces of Light in their apocalyptic struggle against the powers of Darkness under the arch-fiend Belial, the Devil. . . . All in all, the first eager perusals of the new material supported the idea that in Essenism we might expect to find clues to the conception of Christian ideas* (John Allegro, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth, pp. 12-13).

The Dead Sea Scrolls revealed thus that the Messiah expected by the Essenes conformed much more closely to the image of Jesus expressed in the New Testament than the vague intimations and prophetic messianic expectations of the orthodox Judaism of the first century. Not only is there a great similarity between the Essene Messiah and the Christ figure of the Jewish heresy called Christianity, but also there is every reason to suspect that the Essene variety of Judaism might have served as the matrix of an even more unorthodox Christian heresy known as Gnosticism.

There is no other variety of Judaism besides that of the Essenes that is so closely related to the entire body of New Testament religiosity, including the Gnostic portions thereof"

- Essene and Christian were both practicing if not a form of communism, at least a communitarianism.
- Both were persecuted and therefore resentful of the religious establishment at Jerusalem.

- **Both baptized their initiates.**
- **Both practiced a sacramental ritual meal.**
- **Both were greatly attached to the writings of the prophets and expected a cataclysm and a glorious inception of a messianically ruled new age.**

**The relationship of the People of the Scrolls to the New Testament, and beyond it to the Gnostic gospels, is undeniable.** In addition to this there are certain other questions nonetheless portentous for being unanswered. If the traditional chronology of the lifetime of Jesus and of the subsequent spread of the Christian communities is accepted, then it appears almost imperative that some sort of an already existing organizational structure must have been utilized by the early Christians to build their church. The time between the commonly supposed date of the crucifixion of Jesus and the writing of the earliest of the Pauline letters is much too short to allow for the development of a highly complex network of organized communities with well-developed methods of communication, funding, and a structure of authority that presents itself to the reader of the Epistles of Paul. **There was only one organization in existence that could have served as the foundation for this rapidly developing structure, and it was the order of the Essenes.** Centered on its monastic headquarters by the Dead Sea, but extending all over Judaea and in all likelihood into Egypt, Rome, and Asia Minor, the Essene organization served as a ready-made matrix upon which the new Christian association of communities could be built. **If, as I am suggesting, the Essenes were the ones who swelled the number of converts to the new Christian covenant in the first and formative years of the Church, then the miraculous rapid growth and organization of the Christian network becomes much more plausible.**

*Acts 6:7 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests [these are the Essenes...the Zadok Priests] were obedient to the faith. (KJV)*

In this case we must also admit, as Allegro has done, concerning the Essenes:

***their doctrines, and particularly their messianic expectations, were very much closer to those of their Christian mentors than anything that appears on the surface in the Scrolls.** (Ibid., p. 16).*

A Messiah who failed to transform not only the world but even the fate of his own countrymen in his **shamefully terminated three-year public ministry in which the expected Jewish Messianic promises were not fulfilled** would not have inspired spectacular mass conversions to his gospel. If the same Messiah had been foretold by the prophetic traditions of the People of the Scrolls, or if enough of these people believed that such was the case, then the Essene-Christian connection received full justification. As Hugh Schonfield pointed out:

***We have to allow now what was previously so clearly evident to no more than a relatively few scholars, that the Messianic concepts to which Jesus and others of his time were responsive were far from being confined to biblical sources. They were being shaped by writings and teachings emanating largely from the Essenes and widely regarded as inspired. Until it became possible in recent times to be fully aware of this, and to have access to much of their literature, the true story of Christian beginnings could not be ascertained** (Hugh Schonfield, The Essene Odyssey, (Shaftsbury, England: Element Books, 1984), p. 2).*

If you understood what Schonfield tell us then you saw that he stated that the depiction of Jesus in the New Testament did not fulfill the normal Messianic prophecies expected by normative conservative Biblical Judaism but rather tended to fulfill the Essenic expectations of their coming Cosmic Godman Messiah instead. This concept mind you is extra-Biblical and stands outside normative conservative Judaism and lies more in the apocalyptic of Essene thought which according to many current Biblical Scholars is totally discredited today (one prime example is Lawrence Schiffman who wrote Reclaiming The Dead Sea Scrolls).



Let us then in conclusion summarize those features of the People of the Scrolls that have a direct bearing on the connections, not only historical but also what might be called psychological, that join the Essene transmission with the new covenant of Christianity, and more particularly within that covenant with the early Gnostic variant of Christianity. It is to be hoped that such a summary will present the reader with a deeper understanding of the genius of the People of the Scrolls and of the culmination of this genius in an approach to the Christian message that found its most complete literary expression in the later Nag Hammadi collection of Gnostic scriptures discovered but a few short months before the Scrolls of Qumran.

1. *The Qumran community was located on a site that eminently lends itself as a backdrop to the growth and development of a heterodoxy or heresy of a generally Gnostic character which become for us the earliest Christian expression before Rome's refutation of it in the latter second thorough the fifth centuries.* The choice of the location of the community joined the Essenes of Qumran on the one hand with the messianic figure of Joshua, son of Nun, along with its reliance upon the [Joshua-Jesus allegory](#), and on the other, with the demons and supernatural "watchers" connected with the Abyss of Judgement located in the Rift Valley. All of this could be taken as a documentation of the Essene myths that is at once messianic and angelic-demonic.
2. *The influence of the Essene Teacher of Righteousness and his heavy dependence upon Zoroastrianism in his Qumran theology created a predisposition among the Essenes toward dualism and a rejection of the existing world order and the identification of the world as evil.* The discovery of Khirbet Qumran scrolls in the caves of Dead Sea in 1947, shed light on the Essenes' tenets and practices. A French author, named Dupont Sommer, after reviewing the text of the scrolls, found many evidences of Zoroastrian influence. [The common beliefs of the Essenes and Zoroastrians](#) have been analyzed by different authors and reported and the results show heavy borrowing of both philosophical and religious ideas by the Essenes from Zoroastrianism. The influence of Zoroastrianism in Pharisees is so conspicuous that some authors as Zaehner have called them "Farsis" or "Persians". This of course means a heavy dose of "dualism" is expected and found in Qumran theology since being borrowed from Persian religion in the first place. The appealing Zoroastrian doctrine that light stood for goodness and darkness for evil, had apparently spread to Palestine before the age of Qumran texts and had been accepted by all the sects. The review of the Qumran Scrolls also reveals that the Essenes believed in a constant struggle between the forces of good and evil. What is important for us to note is that all of these theological beliefs and religions positions are later identified as being likewise associated with the earliest Gnostic Christians. Admittedly this predisposition originated in the political conditions of the Jewish kingdom; however, in the minds of the Essenes of Qumran the originally mundane issues soon became transformed into cosmic and metaphysical calamities and predicaments. Every problem facing these Essenes became a Cosmic problem before it was over. The rule of the Hasmonean "evil" priest-kings became the forerunner of the dominion of the archons and the Demiurge of the Gnostics. The sons of light were the early embodiment of the pneumatic Gnostics, and the sons of darkness were similarly the prototypes of the minions of the dark rulers of the lower world recognized by the Gnostics.
3. *The inspiration derived by the authors of the Scrolls did not originate primarily in Jewish dogma and law but in vivid, emotionally charged personal experiences of a mystical nature.* Some of these experiences are freely admitted in the Scrolls; others are disguised by way of metaphors and codes based on such ever-popular ciphers as the transposition of letters and the like. The latest scholarship also agrees-largely as the result of the insights of Jung- that the origin of the writings of the Gnostics is to be sought in direct, personal experience of the mysteries of being rather than in pure syncretism, philosophic speculation, and the like.
4. *The specific variety of messianism developed by the Essenes in conjunction with their attachment to the tragic figure of their mysterious Teacher of Righteousness, prepared the way not only for the messianic career of the Jesus character of the New Testament, but also for the mystical and cosmic Messiahship embodied in the figure of the Gnostic Christ who speaks to us and is extolled in the Nag Hammadi Gnostic gospels.* This circumstance may have been greatly

reinforced by the likely possibility that a large number of the earliest converts to Christianity were Essenes as seen in the passage below.

*Acts 6:7 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests [these are the Essenes...the Zadok priests] were obedient to the faith. (KJV)*

This final point of our summary brings us quite directly and logically to the consideration of the figure of Jesus and to the ways in which this figure may be related to the most intriguing though elusive character within the Essenic drama: the Teacher of Righteousness. Assuredly it is in the relationship of these two immensely important figures that we may find the most important indications of how the "pre-Christian Judaism of Gnostic character" (gnostisierendes Judentum) recognized by Bultmann came to serve as the principal fountain and origin of Gnosticism. It is in the relationship of the expected Essene Messiah to the later projection of the Christian Jesus, and beyond him to the Gnostic Christ, that the link may be discovered which joins the Dead Sea Scrolls of Essene origin with the collection of Gnostic gospels found in Nag Hammadi since it appears that there is a link between the Gnostic Christ, the Essene Messiah and the character of the Christian Jesus of the New Testament.

Elsewhere on this website we have investigated the lack of historical evidence that supports the existence of a historical Jesus. What should concern us is the strong likelihood, in light of the lack of existence of any unforged evidence outside the New Testament that might support the existence of a historical Jesus, that the projection of the New Testament Jesus is but the combination of an expression of a prior hope of the Essenes for the appearance of their Angel-Messiah (Cosmic Godman as the reincarnation of their slain Teacher of Righteousness) and the literalization of the "allegorical Gnostic Christ" which we find later "literalized" and given a historical timeline by the hands of Roman scribes and which has reached us today bolstered by church tradition that supposes that such a depiction of the New Testament Jesus is a historical fact...when research into such an allegation reveals no uncontested or unforged evidence that supports such a premise. That means that more than likely the hoped for Essene Messiah that was extra-Biblical finds continued expression through the Gnostic Christ which is later "literalized" by Rome in their Second New Testament which is but a refutation of the earlier First Gnostic New Testament that taught ONLY an allegorical Christ and not a human-fleshly Christ. For confirmation of such a fact any serious study of Gnosticism, especially Christian Gnosticism, will provide convincing evidence of the former positions.





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## THE INFLUENCE OF ZOROASTRIANISM UPON ESSENE AND JEWISH THEOLGY

It is argued that Zoroastrian theology has contributed much to Western religion. The Achaemenid King Cyrus II (the Great), is quoted by some sources as Zoroastrian, although Zoroaster is not specifically mentioned in Achaemenid inscriptions. Religion at that time, the mid 5th century BC, was in the hands of the Magi and the exact relationship to Zoroastrianism appears complex. Cyrus the Great liberated the Jews from their exile in Babylon. Apart from Psalms and Job, believed to be post-exile, pre-exile Judaism is said to be missing some key ideas apparent in post-exile Judaism (later than 538 BC), and subsequent Christianity. Ideas from Zoroastrian theology which may have influenced exiled Jews include:

- Satan,
- Resurrection,
- Heaven and
- Hell,
- the Soul and
- Final Judgement.

Zoroastrian ideas have also been identified in the writings of the Essenes at Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls) which reveal to us the influence upon the Essenes of Zoroastrian religious beliefs. The Magi have been associated with the Three Wise Men of the Nativity. Some legends talk of Zoroaster being born of a virgin and beginning his ministry at the age of thirty. These are but a few of the ideas that have carried over into the New Testament as well.

- The new Zoroastrianism at this era, believed in one universal God, Ahura Mazda. But the six divine attributes were often envisioned as separate entities, perhaps in the form of archangels that with Ahura Mazda at the center, at times illogically were called seven Amesha Spenta.
- There was battle between the forces of good and evil, with the ultimate victory of good over evil (known as Dualism). Those who sided with the forces of good, were supporting the Divine cause. The evil forces were regarded as anger, envy, lies and environmental pollution, etc. In effect the Zoroastrian followers had developed a form of angelology and demonology.
- The Persians believed in liberty and freedom of choice, as reflected in the Gathas and the texts of later Avesta.
- Another Zoroastrian concept was The Kingdom of God or chosen government, wherein all the virtuous men and women reside freely and choose leaders for their righteousness, and the oppressed will be rehabilitated. The goal was for everyone to work toward establishing the "chosen government" where good overcomes the evil.
- They believed in immortality of soul, life after death, that the souls of the dead will be

**judged for their deeds of the past on the bridge of judgement (Chinovat), where they were guided by their conscience and judged by three angels (Mithra, Rashn, Sraosha), who were to differentiate them and determine the eternal dwellings of the two groups in heaven or hell.**

- **Resurrection (Rastakhiz) or the end of the world, when the dead revive and the new world will have a fresh life and new beginning (Farsho Kerat or fresh act).**
- **In the Gathas, Saoshyant is a general term and means benefactor. There are benefactors of the past, present and future, but no reference is made to any promised person who shall advent. The concept of future benefactors however at this time had been transformed into the savior of future who will perform the task of resurrection.**

**The Israelites on the other hand, based on the preexilic writings had not developed eschatology. They rather believed in Sheol or an underground and desolate world where the good and bad after death will equally end up. Therefore the notions of judgement after death and reward of heaven and retribution of hell, were nonexistent in their tenets.**

**Yahweh was the covenant god of Israelites and did not have a universal status, the dualistic forces of good and evil, angelology and demonology were absent in their beliefs as reflected in the books of preexilic Judaism. All of this comes into being for Israel following their capture by Persian after the defeat of Babylon by Persia. It was during this time that Israel is influenced by such religious ideas and we find them surface in post-exilic Judaism following release from Persian captivity.**





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## THE PERSIAN INFLUENCE UPON THE JEWISH MESSIANIC BELIEF (INFLUENCE UPON THE ESSENES)

Among no people was the longing for redemption so lively and the expectation of a speedy end of the world so strong as among the Jews. Since the Babylonian captivity (586/536 B.C.) the former Jewish outlook upon the world had undergone a great change. Fifty years had been spent by the Israelites in the land of the stranger. For two hundred years after their return to their own land the Jewish people were under Persian overlordship and religious influence. As a consequence of this they were in close connection politically and economically with the Achaemenidean Empire, and this did not cease when Alexander overthrew the Persian power and brought the whole Eastern world under Greek influence. During this lengthy period Persian modes of thinking and Persian religious views had influenced in many ways the old Jewish opinions, and had introduced a large number of new ideas.

- First of all the extreme dualism of the Persians had impressed a distinctly dual character upon Jewish Monotheism. God and the world, which in the old ideas had often mingled with one another, were separated and made to stand in opposition to each other.
- Following the same train of thought, the old national God YHWH, in imitation of the Persian Ahuramazda (Ormuzd), had developed from a God of fire, light, and sky into a God of supernatural purity and holiness. Surrounded by light and enthroned in the Beyond, like Ahuramazda, the source of all life, the living God held intercourse with his creatures upon the earth only through the instrumentality of a court of angels. These messengers of God or intermediate beings in countless numbers moved between heaven and earth upon his service.
- And just as Angromainyu (Ahriman), the evil, was opposed to Ahuramazda, the good, and the struggle between darkness and light, truth and falsehood, life and death, was, according to Persian ideas, reproduced in the course of earthly events, so many Jews too ascribed to Satan the role of an adversary of God, a corrupter of the divine creation, and made him, as Prince of this world and leader of the forces of hell, measure his strength with the King of Heaven.

It is certain that the old Israelite YHWH only attained that spiritualized character for which he is nowadays extolled under the influence of the Persians imageless worship of God.

In the struggle of the two opposing worlds, according to Persian ideas, Mithras stood in the foreground, the spirit of light, truth, and justice, the divine “friend” of men, the “mediator,” “deliverer,” and “saviour” of the world. He shared his office with Honover, Ahuramazdas Word of creation and revelation; and indeed in most things their attributes were mingled. An incarnation of fire or the sun, above all of the struggling, suffering, triumphant light, which presses victoriously through night and darkness, Mithras was also connected with death and immortality, and passed as guide of souls and Judge in the under-world. He was the “divine son,” of whom it was said that Ahuramazda had fashioned him as great and worthy of reverence as his own self. Indeed, he was in essence Ahuramazda himself, proceeding from his supernatural light, and given a concrete individuality. As companion in creation and “protector” of the world he kept the

universe standing in its struggle against its enemies. At the head of the heavenly host he fought for God, and with his sword of flame he drove the Daemons of Darkness in terror back into the shadows. To take part in this combat on the side of God, to build up the future kingdom of God by the work of a life-giving civilization, by the rendering fruitful of sterile wastes, the extinction of noxious animals, and by moral self-education, seemed the proper end of human existence. But when the time should have been fulfilled and the present epoch come to an end, according to Persian belief, Ahuramazda was then to raise up from the seed of Zarathustra, the founder of this religion, the "virgins son," Saoshyant (Sraosha, Sosiosch, which signifies the Saviour), or, as it ran according to another rendering, Mithras himself should descend upon the earth and in a last fierce struggle overwhelm Angromainyu and his hosts, and cast them down into the Nether World. He would then raise the dead in bodily shape, and after a General Judgment of the whole world, in which the wicked should be condemned to the punishments of hell and the good raised to heavenly glory, establish the "millennial Kingdom of Peace." Hell itself was not to last for ever, for a great reconciliation was to be finally held out even to the damned. Then Angromainyn also would make peace with Ahuramazda, and upon a new earth beneath a new heaven all were to be united to one another in everlasting blessedness. Please understand that these "religious ideas" persisted long before the Jewish people were ever captives of the Persians and were only later introduced into these concepts following the Persian conquering of Babylon and the acquisition of the previous Babylonian Jewish captives.

*These ideas entered the circle of Jewish thought and there brought about a complete transformation of the former belief in a Messiah.*

## THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF THEIR MESSIAH BEFORE THE PERSIAN INFLUENCE

Messiah-that is, the Anointed (in Greek, Christos) originally signified the king as representative of YHWH before the people and of the people before YHWH. According to 2 Sam. 7:13 he was placed in the same relation of an obedient "son" to his "father," in which the whole people was conscious of standing (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 32:6; Hosea 11:1). Then the opposition between the holy dignity of the "Anointed" of God and the humanly imperfect personality of the Jewish kings and their failures led to the ideal of the Messiah being transferred to the future and the complete realization of the rule of YHWH over his people being expected only then. In this sense the ancient prophets had already celebrated the Messiah as an ideal King of the future, who would experience in the fullest sense the high assurances of YHWH'S favor, of which David had been deemed worthy, since he would be completely worthy of them. They had described this future Messiah as the Hero, who would be more than Moses and Joshua, who would establish the promised glory of Israel, dispose the people anew, and bring YHWH'S religion even to the heathen. They had glorified him in that he would span the heavens afresh, establish a new earth, and make Israel Lord over all Gentile nations. In this they had at first understood the Messiah only as a human being, as a new David or of his seed-theocratic king, divinely favored prince of peace and just ruler over his people, just as the Persian Saoshyant was to be a man of the seed of Zarathustra. This "anointed" Messiah was always to be a man and not a Godman or sun-godman. Thus in this sense a Cyrus, only a human being, the deliverer of the people from the Babylonian captivity, the rescuer and overlord of Israel, had been acclaimed Messiah (Isa. 44:28; 45:1).

## THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN MESSIAH INTO SOMETHING MORE THAN A MAN



But over time, just as Saoshyant had been undesignedly transfigured in the imagination of the people into a divine being and made one with the figure of Mithras, so also among the prophets the Messiah was more and more assigned the part of a divine king. He was called “divine hero,” “Father of Eternity,” and the prophet Isaiah indulged in a description of his kingdom of peace, in which the wolf would lie down by the lamb, men would no longer die before their time, and would enjoy the fruit of their fields without tithe, while right and justice would reign upon earth under this king of a golden age as it had never done before. Secret and supernatural, as was his nature, so should the birth of the Messiah be. Though a divine child, he was to be born in lowly state (Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:1). The personality of the Messiah mingled with that of YHWH himself, as though it were God himself of whose ascending the throne and journey heavenwards the Psalmists sing (Psm. 47:6,9; 62:12).

## THE INFLUENCE OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Up to now we only see just a handful of examples where the Jewish prophets ascribed "Divine" attributes to the expected deliverer; their Messiah. It is one thing to say that the Messiah is "Godly" and a whole other to say the Messiah "is God." But now with the advent of apocalyptic literature the concept of the human Messiah who is anointed by God will drastically change and become literally God. These alternations of the Messiah between a human and a divine nature appear still more clearly in the Jewish apocalypics of the last century before and the first century after Christ. Thus the Apocalypse of Daniel (about 165 B.C.) speaks of one who as Son of Man will descend upon the clouds of heaven and will be brought before the “Ancient of Days.” The whole tone of the passage leaves no doubt that the Son of Man (barnasa) is a superhuman being representing the Deity. Owing to the fact that the book of Daniel was written around 165 B.C. yet the historical Daniel lived two centuries earlier one is not hard pressed to understand that this is a form of literature is a perfect example of "Pseudepigrapha" or false authorship of a supposed "divine" writ where one also easily sees the blending of prior Persian religious thought mixed with Jewish prophetic thought. Please understand that at this time in Israel the "canon" of accepted "Divine" literature was basically closed but many who wished to promote their own unique understanding of "prophecy" would draft and author documents in the names of long dead "heroes" and claim that such was "found" in order to slip in their documents under the disguise of being written by recognized Biblical heroes or prophets of the ancient past. This is why the book of Daniel is included in the historical books of the Jewish Bible today and not the prophetic books where one might expect to find it. Such is a major example of most apocalyptic literature owing primarily to the Essene's influence where they departed long ago from normative Judaism and gravitated toward a more apocalyptic understanding of social-political-religious events where they blended Persian/Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Pythagorean beliefs with Judaism and passed it off as "Divine."

To this new "divine/human" Messiah the majesty and kingdom of God have been entrusted in order that, at the end of the existing epoch, he should descend upon the clouds of heaven, surrounded by a troop of angels, and establish an everlasting power, a Kingdom of Heaven. In the picture-language of the Essene Enoch (in the last decade before Christ) the Messiah, the “Chosen One,” the “Son of Man,” appears as a supernatural pro-existing being, who was hidden in God before the world was created, whose glory continues from eternity to eternity and his might from generation to generation, in whom the spirit of wisdom and power dwells, who judges hidden things, punishes the wicked, but will save the holy and just (Enoch. xlv.-li). Indeed, the Apocalypse of Esdras (the so-called fourth Book of Esdras) expressly combats the opinion that the judgment of the world will come through another than God, and likewise describes the Messiah as a kind of “second God,” as the “Son of God,” as the human incarnation of the Godhead (4th Esdras chap vi.1 sqq).

In all of this the influence of Persian beliefs is unmistakable, whether these arose in Iran itself

**directly, or whether the idea of a God-appointed king and deliverer of the world was borrowed by the Persians from the circle of Babylonian ideas.** Here this conception had taken deep root and was applied at different times now to this king.

- **Just as in the Persian religion the image of Saoshyant, so also in the Jewish view the picture of the Messiah wavered between a human king of the race of David and a supernatural being of divine nature descended from heaven.**
- **And just as in the Persian representation of the coming of Saoshyant and the final victory of the Kingdom of Light there would be a preceding period during which threatening signs would appear in the heavens, the whole of nature would find itself in upheaval and mankind would be scourged with fearful plagues, so also the Jewish Apocalypse speaks of the “woes” of the Messiah and describes a period of terror which would precede the coming of the Messiah.**

The coming of the power of God was looked upon as a miraculous catastrophe suddenly breaking in from on high, as a conflagration of the world followed by a new creation. The Jewish agreed with the Persian view in this also, that it made a heavenly kingdom of undisturbed bliss “in the light of the everlasting life and in likeness of the angels” follow the earthly world-wide empire of the Messiah. This they imagined on exactly the same lines as the Persian Paradise. There would the holy drink of the “Water of Life” and nourish themselves on the fruit which hang upon the “Tree of Life.” The wicked, on the other hand, would be cast into hell and suffer in fearful torments the just punishment of their sins.

The conception of a resurrection of the dead and a last judgment had hitherto been strange to the Jews. In pre-exilic days they allowed the body to die and the soul after death to go down as a shadow without feeling into Hades (Sheol), without disturbing themselves further about its fate. **Now, however, with the doctrine of the destruction of the world by fire and the general judgment, the idea of personal immortality entered the world of Jewish thought.** Thus it is said by Daniel that on the day of judgment the dead will rise again, some waking to everlasting life, others to everlasting perdition. “But the teachers will shine as the brightness of heaven, and those who led the multitude to justice as the stars for ever and ever.” **With the acceptance of personal immortality the whole tone of religious thought was deepened and enriched in the direction of thought for the individual. Former Jewish morality had been essentially of a collective kind. It was not so much the individual as the people viewed collectively that was looked upon as the object of divine solicitude. At this point the position, the road to which had been already prepared by the prophets, was definitely established, that the individual hoped for a personal religious salvation and as a consequence felt in direct personal relationship with YHWH.** God indeed remained, as the Persians had taught them to understand him, the superhuman lord of heaven enthroned in pure light, the source of all life, the living God. His metaphysical qualities, however, his dazzling glory and unconquerable might were ever more and more overshadowed by his moral attributes: goodness, grace, and mercy appeared as the most prominent features in the character of YHWH. God seemed a loving father who leads his children through life with kindly care, and without whose consent not a hair of one of his creatures could be touched. The strong tendency within Judaism, represented by the upper currents of pharisaic rabbinism, continually drew the national boundaries closer, and was ever more anxiously occupied with a painfully strict observance of the letter of the law and a conscientious observance of ritualistic ordinances. Ethics threatened to be extinguished under a system of conventional rules of an essentially juristic nature. Yet all the while a more human and natural morality was arising, an inward piety, warm-hearted, popular, and sound, which broke through the narrow limits of Jewish nationalism, and sent a fresh current into the heavy atmosphere of official legality. It was then that the groundwork of later Christian ethics was laid in the purified morality of the psalms, aphorisms, and other edificatory writings of a Job, Baruch, Jesus son of Sirach, etc. It was then that the Jewish Monotheism set itself to extend its sway beyond the boundaries of its own land and to enter into competition with the other religions of antiquity, from which it was to draw back vanquished only before a matured Christianity.





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# THE EXODUS ALLEGORY AND THE Gnostic CREATION OF THE JESUS MYTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Let's examine the various elements from which the Jesus myth was constructed, beginning, as the original Christians undoubtedly did themselves, with the myth of *Exodus*.

## THE EXODUS ALLEGORY:

This famous Jewish myth relates the story of Moses leading his people out of captivity in Egypt by miraculously parting the Red Sea. There follows 40 years of wandering in the wilderness in search of the Promised Land, at the end of which Moses dies. It is his successor, Joshua ben Nun, who miraculously parts the river Jordan to lead the Jews to the destined homeland. So far so good as this sticks to the "literal" understanding of the text that we are familiar with.

It is important to understand right up front that the name "Jesus" itself comes from *Exodus* (Joshua/Jesus makes his first appearance in Exodus 17:8). In Greek the Hebrew name "Joshua" becomes "Jesus".

**Answer for yourself:** How come most of us are not aware of this fact?

Few know this because today it is normal practice to use Joshua for the hero of *Exodus* and "Jesus" for the hero of the gospels, which avoids any comparison of the two. In the days of Jesus, however, it would have been completely obvious that they shared the same name. In fact if a Gnostic Jew was writing for a Gentile audience then he would have written "Jesus" and not "Joshua" long before the time of the supposed historical Jesus. This is not a coincidence.

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be remotely possible that the Christian Jesus is a mythic development of the Jesus/Joshua of *Exodus*? Well that is a very serious question but with our previous study into the importance of "myths" as a vehicle for encoded Divine Truth then let us examine this possibility as best as possible.

- In Hebrew the name Joshua/Jesus is written with the letters Yod Heh Shin Vah Heh.
- The letters Yod Heh Vah Heh (minus the Shin) is known as the Tetragrammaton and was extremely significant to Jewish Gnostics, as they were used to signify the unpronounceable name of God, usually rendered today with added vowels as either Jehovah or Yahweh.

As Philo explains, when the middle letter Shin, known as the Holy Letter, is added, the name means "Saviour of the Lord".

**Answer for yourself:** Then does "Joshua" and or "Jesus" mean "Savior of the Lord"? Yes!

**The "Christ" is also linked to the Exodus myth.** Paul tells us that, as well as Jesus, Moses was also "God's Christ" (Heb. 11:24-27).

*Heb 12:24-27 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (KJV)*

"Christ", which means "Anointed One", is a Greek rendering of the Hebrew word "Messiah", which was an epithet for a leader, used of Jewish kings. **Although today the name "Jesus Christ" is inextricably linked to the Literalist figure of the supposed founder of Christianity, in the first century C.E. the name would have been heard as obviously symbolic, meaning "The Saviour King".**

**Jewish Gnostics, and Christian Gnostics after them, understood Exodus to be an initiation allegory.**

## THE ALLEGORY EXPLAINED...COMING OUT OF EGYPT

Egypt represents the body. When the initiate identifies with only the body and the flesh they are "in captivity". **To "come forth out of Egypt" was understood as leaving behind the idea of being merely a body and discovering the soul.** This was the beginning of the Spiritual experience and discovery of God. Hippolytus recounts for us that those who are ignorant...are Egyptians in need of departing Egypt; that is from their body centered existence (Hippolytus, *Ref.*, 5.11). The ignorant Egyptians represent those "without Gnosis", without the knowledge of the Divine Spark within them. It was this class of people who remain identified with their physical selves and who did not possess the "knowledge/Gnosis"; that they were Divine Sparks of God entrapped in these fleshy and carnal bodies.

## CROSSING THE RED SEA..."BAPTISM"...FIRST STAGE

Crossing the Red Sea was understood as symbolizing a purifying baptism, which is the first stage of initiation on the path of spiritual awakening for those who are "conscious". **Explaining that Exodus should be understood "allegorically",** Paul writes:

*"Our ancestors passed through the Red Sea and so received baptism into the fellowship of Moses" (I Cor. 10:1-6):*

*1 Cor 10:1-6 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (KJV)*

Initiation by baptism begins a process in which initiates must face their doubts and confusion, symbolized by the Jews being afflicted in the desert for 40 years.

## THE DEATH OF MOSES...SECOND STAGE



Having come to possess this "knowledge" & "Gnosis" that within their body dwells the Divine Spark or soul of God then the next stage is experiencing the "death" of the old self which was represented by the death of Moses. Moses is mythically reborn as Joshua/Jesus.

## THE PROMISED LAND ACHIEVED...SALVATION...THIRD STAGE

It is through this "new Moses, this Joshua/Jesus, that one completes the journey to the Promised Land, representing the "reborn" initiate who realizes Gnosis. It is only through this "new man" (Joshua/Jesus) that the goal of salvation can be achieved in the Old Testament for Israel. All of this was understood in a "literal" sense. But that will change with the Gnostic New Testament of Marcion.

The basic structure of the Exodus allegory, representing the fundamental stages of Gnostic initiation, is the framework upon which the Jesus myth was constructed.

## PARALLELS TO THE JOSHUA/JESUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

This same Exodus story is retold through the Gnostic Christ of the New Testament.

### BEING BORN AGAIN...BAPTISM...FIRST STAGE

The first stage of initiation into this higher self-awareness of one's self and the "soul within" is one of cleansing and purification and struggle. In the Exodus myth this is the crossing of the Red Sea, which inaugurates 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. We find the exact same thing in the Jesus story represented by Jesus' baptism, followed by his 40 days in the wilderness.

### DEATH OF THE OLD SELF...THE "OLD MAN"...SECOND STAGE

The next stage in the process of initiation is the "death" of the old self which precipitates Gnosis. This is represented in the Exodus myth by the death of Moses and in the Jesus myth by the death of Jesus on the cross.

**Answer for yourself:** Does Paul teach this Gnostic Exodus allegory through the New Testament "Christ"? He sure does.

*Rom 6:6 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (KJV)*

*Eph 4:22-23 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind (to the revelation of Christ-God within you); (KJV)*

*Col 3:9-10 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (KJV)*

In Col 3:9-10 Paul appeals to believers who have come to the "Gnosis" of God within them and that they have been created in the image of God, to not fall back into lives typified by sin and fleshly deeds. Live according to the higher knowledge that they have received:

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among*

*the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

## JESUS' RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD...SALVATION...THIRD STAGE

The experience of Gnosis is represented in *Exodus* by Joshua-Jesus crossing to the Promised Land. This is the salvation of Israel as depicted in the Old Testament. Its paralleled in the New Testament if found in Jesus' resurrection from the dead and ascension to Heaven.

## COMPARING THE STRUCTURE OF THE *EXODUS* WITH THE JESUS STORY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...SEEN AS Gnostic INITIATION ALLEGORIES

### INITIATION PROCESS

- PURIFICATION
  - Old Testament...Exodus' example: Crossing of the Red Sea
  - New Testament...Jesus example: Baptism by John
- DEATH OF THE OLD SELF
  - Old Testament...Exodus example: Death of Moses
  - New Testament...Jesus example: Crucifixion of Jesus
- REALIZATION OF GNOSIS
  - Old Testament...Exodus example: The Promised Land
  - New Testament...Jesus example: Crucifixion and Resurrection

The earliest Christians understood the *Exodus* allegory as we do not today as contemporary Christians and followers of Jesus. That being so the original Christians classified people as "the captive, the called and the chosen". These were the Naasene Gnostics as described by Hippolytus, op. cit., 5.1-2 ff. Hippolytus relates to us of three churches of the Gnostics, the angelis, the psychic and the earthly, and their names are the chosen, the called and the captive. These terms clearly derive from the myth of the *Exodus*. Those yet to undergo initiation and still trapped in the idea of being a physical body are like the Jews captive in Egypt. Those who have heard the call to awaken and begun the spiritual journey by being initiated into the Outer Mysteries of Christianity are like those Jews who were "called out of Egypt" to begin the journey to their true home. Those who have undergone the process of purification and spiritual struggle necessary to prepare themselves for Gnosis and been chosen to be initiated into the secret Inner Mysteries of Christianity are like those "chosen people" whom Joshua-Jesus leads across the river Jordan to the Promised Land. Clement regarded those Christians who have yet to reach Gnosis as being of three different types, defined by their relationship to God, as the slave, the faithful slave and the friend (Clement, *Strom.*, 3). Initiates who finally realized Gnosis were known as "those who have crossed over" (Mead, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten, 1906, p. 186).

Early Christians were well aware of the parallels between their Jesus Christ and the Jesus Christ of Exodus. Justin Martyr, for example, explains that the Christian Jesus will lead his people to the Promised Land just as the Jesus of *Exodus* led his people to the Promised Land (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Typho, chap. 113). Justin entitled this chapter "*Joshua was a figure of Christ.*" Justin referred to the Old Testament Joshua 38 times in an effort to convince the Jew Typho that the Hebrew Scriptures are full of references to Jesus. Justin traces the motif of the cross to *Exodus*, where Moses holds up a serpent on a cross and says, "If you look at this image and believe, you shall be saved by it" (Num. 21:8). In this Justin claims that Plato borrowed his idea of the "Son of God" crucified in the cosmos (Timaeus, 34) from Moses. This source is made explicit in *The Gospel of John*, where Jesus is made to announce:

*"The Son of Man must be lifted up as the serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness."* (John



### 3:14)

Other, more incidental, mythic motifs found in the Jesus myth also come from *Exodus*. Once he has crossed the river Jordan, the Jesus of *Exodus* selects 12 men to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. After his baptism in the river Jordan, the Jesus of the gospels likewise selects 12 men as his immediate followers (John 3:13).

**Answer for yourself:** What is the origin for these references to the number "12"?

Both motifs refer to the 12 astrological signs of the zodiac." After the crossing of the Jordan Joshua-Jesus orders that 12 stones be set up, one for each of the 12 tribes, at a place called Gilgal.

**Answer for yourself:** What are we missing? The Hebrew word for Gilgal means "wheel" or "circle". This is an illusion to the Zodiac once again. In the later Jesus Myth Gilgal was interpreted as the zodiac and the Jordan as the Milky Way. Important to note is that Attis was born by a river which symbolized "the Galaxy, or the milky circle, from which a passive body descends to the Earth" (Sallust, *On The Gods and the World*, 4). In mystical Judaism reincarnation is still called "Gilgul". Jesus' appearance in Galilee (which comes from the same root word) where he selects the 12 disciples, echoes those early exploits of the Old Testament Joshua-Jesus (A. Drews, *The Christ Myth*, 1968, p.240). **Such a reference is not surprising. The Jews had adopted astrology from the Babylonians whilst in exile in Babylon, eventually becoming renowned throughout the ancient world as astrologers. They even claimed that the Jewish Patriarch Abraham had been the inventor of this ancient science.**

In the myth of Moses, at his birth the evil Pharaoh, fearful of a prophesy that Moses would be the cause of his downfall, commits mass infanticide in an attempt to kill him, In the gospel myth of Jesus this becomes the "slaughter of the innocents" perpetrated by the evil King Herod who, fearful of a prophesy that the true King of the Jews has been born, attempts to kill the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:2-16). Kronos devours all his children of Rhea because of a prophesy that he would be overthrown by one of them. Rhea is smuggled away to a secret cave where she gives birth to Zeus, who later supplants his father.

**Answer for yourself:** Sound familiar?

Mary the sister of Moses becomes Jesus' mother Mary, a correspondence pointed out in many Christian texts, as well as in the Muslim Qur'an.

Like the Jews in *Exodus*, in the gospel story Jesus is called out of Egypt, where he has been in hiding, like the soul within the body. *The Gospel of Matthew* explains that this is to fulfil the prophesy "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" (Matt. 2:15). **Here, as elsewhere in the gospels, we should read "fulfil the prophesy" as a coded reference to the source of the symbolic motif and its intended allegorical meaning.** This is prophesy in retrospect. **Jesus fulfils Jewish scriptural expectations exactly because the Jesus story has been constructed from them.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that almost all the Messianic prophecies in the New Testament were written and intended to be taken "allegorically" and not "literally"? Read that again!

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that the translation of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was altered for this purpose by the Therapeutae-Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt? **This was done to spread the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" as Joshua-Jesus to the Greek speaking world. This translation of the Hebrew Scriptures took great license with the Hebrew Scriptures and we end up with a Greek translation that was intended to be taken "allegorically" at best but sadly has been taken "literally" by the world today. By these translators, the expected human Jewish Messiah was, as shown in prior articles, blended with Mystery Religions and Gnosticism in presenting the Jewish Messiah as a dying - resurrecting Godman which was NEVER to be interpreted "LITERALLY" in the first place. This brings us to the forgery of the first New Testament by Marcion by Rome where**

**they took the Gnostic "allegorical" Christ-Concept and put flesh on him by adding the genealogies, infancy narratives, and anti-Gnostic writings to which they placed Paul's name like the Pastoral epistles!!!**

Piecing together previously existing mythological material in a new way was a traditional Jewish technique known as *midrash*. It has long been known to scholars, for example, that the entire passion narrative in the gospels has been created from motifs taken from *Psalms* 22, 23, 38 and 39 and from the depiction of the "suffering servant" in *The Book of Isaiah* (E. Doherty, *The Gospels as Midrash and Symbolism*, 1999, 225 ff.).

The Essenes taught that in ancient times the Jesus of *Exodus* had hidden secret teachings, so only those who were worthy could discover them at the appropriate time (The Essene *Damascus Document*, 5:2-4). **These Essenes developed a contemporary mythic Christ figure called the "Teacher of Righteousness", whom they identified with the Jesus of *Exodus*** (S. A. Hoeller, Jung and the Lost Gospels: *Insights into the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library*, 1989, p. 50). **This figure eventually became the Jesus of the gospels, a mythical reincarnation of the great hero of the most important of all the Jewish Gnostic myths. The secret teachings hidden by Jesus the Christ of *Exodus* are finally made public by the reworked figure of Jesus the Christ in the gospels. This is the "secret not revealed in former times" but "now disclosed" of which Paul writes in his letters.**

*Eph 3:3-6 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (KJV)*

## CONCLUSION

As you are beginning to see "the Christ" written of by Paul in his authentic and earliest epistles was not a human Christ in the form of a human Jesus. Rather "the Christ" was the embodiment of the Divine come to tabernacle within mankind and bridge the gap from the Spirit realm to the realm of physical existence. This Logos and "the Christ" was an intermediary in non-human form that connects mankind to God. Coming to the understanding of the self-knowledge that God dwelt within you was explained to initiates who were coming to this understanding through an allegory based upon the Exodus of history. The "literal" history of Israel was expressed as an "allegory" and applied to a higher salvation experience in those coming to the knowledge of God in centuries before and after the first century. The old man of fleshly lusts was dying when coming to this "Gnosis" and being resurrected as a "new man" with a new spiritual revelation of God within and the purpose for one's existence above a life of sin. **Through the "myth" of the dying-resurrecting Godman, which was at this time ONLY UNDERSTOOD ALLEGORICALLY, one was to identify with the "pattern" of salvation in the Old Testament as lived out in his life.** This plan of salvation was, for the earliest Christians, coming to the understanding that through baptism (being born again), repentance (death of self and flesh) and resurrection (living with a new awareness and surrender to the will of the Christ within) was one achieving the New Testament salvation.

**That is until Rome will later come along and take this allegorical New Testament of Marcion that expressed the above beliefs and change it almost beyond recognition.** It was God in Christ within mankind. The whole narrative of the baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection of "the Christ" in the First New Testament was only intended to be a parallel and allegory of what "physically" happened to Israel in the Old Testament. The principles in this story were "allegorized" by the earliest Christian Gnostics and Essenes-Therapeutae and applied to the awakening of the Spirit within mankind and the liberation from darkness into the light of God. Later Rome will come and reinterpret "the Christ" as if a "literal" incarnation of God within a human as was thought of their Roman Emperors. In so doing they will in time though first oral reinterpretation and teaching and later through forgery of the First New Testament and invention of other



**documents espousing their theological views distort beyond recognition the earliest understanding of "the Christ" has had been held by the earliest Gentile and Jewish Gnostic Christians. With the purge of Gnostic materials and the subsequent burning of the world's libraries over the next two or more centuries the censorship of Rome was complete. The knowledge of "the Christ", that was to be understood only "allegorically" and which had been since Egypt, was not lost to mankind; that is until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library some fifty years ago. Throughout the last two hundred years sporadic voices were heard faintly as to this truth but today with the aid of archeology and the proliferation once again of this knowledge we can learn of this deception and restore the truth concerning God's Christ. No longer must we be enslaved to a "literal" interpretation of "the Christ" as the Joshua-Jesus of the New Testament and be overtaken by idolatry and false worship since accepting these "literal" views of "the Christ."**

**Now let us continue.**



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## CONTRASTING THE JEWISH MESSIAH AND THE PAGAN GODMAN

As we have seen in the previous articles these Jewish mythological motifs were syncretized with motifs borrowed from the initiation allegories of the Pagan Mysteries. All of the great Pagan Gnostics, such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Plotinus, were initiates of one or more of the Mystery cults that were universal throughout the ancient Mediterranean. Unlike the traditional ritual of the official state religions, which were designed to aid social cohesion, **the Mysteries were an individualistic form of spirituality**, which offered visions and personal enlightenment. Initiates underwent a secret process of initiation, which profoundly transformed their state of consciousness. Each Mystery tradition consisted of:

- **exoteric Outer Mysteries, which involved religious practices in which anyone could participate, and**
- **esoteric Inner Mysteries, to which access was gained by undergoing a process of initiation.**

**In the Inner Mysteries the rituals and myths of the Outer Mysteries were revealed as allegories encoding mystical teaching which could lead an initiate to the experience of Gnosis.**

## THE REDEEMED GODDESS AND THE DYING-RESURRECTING GODMAN

The most important characters in these allegorical initiation myths were the lost and redeemed Goddess and the dying and resurrecting Godman. Regional variations on these two mighty figures are found throughout the ancient world:

- **In Egypt they were known as Isis and Osiris,**
- **In Greece as Persephone and Dionysus,**
- **In Syria as Aphrodite and Adonis,**
- **In Asia Minor as Cybele and Attis,**
- **In Mesopotamia as Ishtar and Marduk,**
- **In Persia as the Magna Mater and Mithras,**
- **In the area around Judaea as Asherah and Baal.**

Fundamentally all these godman are the same mythical being. As was the practice from as early as the third century B.C.E. they were understood under the combined name Osiris-Dionysus. From the fifth century B.C.E. philosophers such as Xenophanes and Empedocles had **ridiculed taking the stories of the gods and goddess literally. They viewed them as allegories of human spiritual experience.** The myth of Osiris-Dionysus should not be understood as just intriguing tales, but as a symbolic language, which encodes the mystical teachings of the Inner Mysteries. The more that I studied over the years the various versions of the myth of Osiris-Dionysus the more it became obvious that the story of Jesus had all the characteristics of this



perennial tale. Event by event, I found that I was able to construct Jesus' supposed biography from the mythic motifs previously relating to Osiris-Dionysus:

- **Osiris-Dionysus is God made flesh, the savior and "Son of God."**
- **His father is God and his mother is a mortal virgin.**
- **He is born in a cave or humble cowshed on December 25 before three shepherds.**
- **He offers his followers the chance to be born again through the rites of baptism.**
- **He miraculously turns water into wine at a marriage ceremony.**
- **He rides triumphantly into town on a donkey while people wave palm leaves to honor him.**
- **He dies at Eastertime as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.**
- **After his death he descends to hell, then on the third day he rises from the dead and ascends to heaven in glory.**
- **His followers await his return as the judge during the Last Days.**
- **His death and resurrection are celebrated by a ritual meal of bread and wine, which symbolize his body and blood.**

These are just some of the motifs shared between the tales of Osiris-Dionysus and the biography of Jesus.

**Answer for yourself:** Why are these remarkable similarities not common knowledge?

Because, as we were to discover later, the early Roman Church did everything in its power to prevent us perceiving them. It systematically destroyed Pagan sacred literature in a brutal program of eradicating the Mysteries-a task it performed so completely that today Paganism is regarded as a "dead" religion.

Although surprising to us now, to writers of the first few centuries C.E. these similarities between the new Christian religion and the ancient Mysteries were extremely obvious. Pagan critics of Christianity, such as the satirist Celsus, complained that this recent religion was nothing more than a pale reflection of their own ancient teachings. Early "Church fathers," such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Irenaeus, were understandably disturbed and resorted to the desperate claim that these similarities were the result of diabolical mimicry. Using one of the most absurd arguments ever advanced, these early "Church fathers" accused the Devil of "plagiarism by anticipation," of deviously copying the true story of Jesus before it had actually happened in an attempt to mislead the gullible! Viewed impartially, it appeared to be just another version of the same basic story.

The obvious explanation is that as early Christianity became the dominant power in the previously Pagan world, popular motifs from Pagan mythology became grafted onto the biography of Jesus. This is a possibility that is even put forward by many Christian theologians. The virgin birth, for example, is often regarded as an extraneous later addition that should not be understood literally. Such motifs were "borrowed" from Paganism in the same way that Pagan festivals were adopted as Christian saints' days. This theory is common among those who go looking for the "real" Jesus hidden under the weight of accumulated mythological debris (T. Freke and Peter Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, p. 4-8).

The Pagan Gnostics were aware that all these different Goddesses and Godmen were essentially two universal mythic archetypes. They sometimes used the general name "Great Mother" to denote the Goddess and "Osiris-Dionysus" to denote the Godman.

- **The myth of the Pagan Godman describe:**
- **A "Son of God",**
- **Born to a virgin on 25 December,**
- **Who dies at Easter through crucifixion,**
- **Who resurrects on the third day**
- **He is a prophet who offers his followers the chance to be born again through the rites of**

**baptism.**

- **He is a wonder-worker**
- **He raises the dead a**
- **He miraculously turns water into wine at a marriage ceremony**
- **He is a saviour who offers his followers redemption through partaking in a meal of bread and wine, symbolic of his body and blood.**

**These and many more mythic motifs were incorporated by the original Christians into their myth of Jesus.**

The Therapeutae, whom Philo describes as "like those initiated into the Mysteries of Dionysus", were based in Egypt not far from a lake where there had been major celebrations of the Mysteries of the Egyptian Godman Osiris for centuries (Philo, On The Contemplative Life, 11-12). The Essenes were based in Judaea, near the place where Joshua-Jesus ben Nun was said to have crossed into the Promised Land. Qumran, where the Essene library of the Dead Sea Scrolls was discovered in 1947, is only a few miles from the place where Joshua crossed the Jordan like a second Moses crossing the Red Sea (Hoeller, op. cit., p. 29). **From these mythically charged sacred sites, Jewish Gnostics combined the *Exodus* initiation myth of the Jewish Christ Moses-Jesus and the initiation myths of the Pagan Godman Osiris-Dionysus to create a unique synthesis we know as the gospel story of Jesus Christ.**

These two sources are made explicit in the two incompatible accounts of Jesus' birth (Matt. 1:1-8, Luke 3:23-38). On the one hand we are given long genealogies tracing the ancestors of his father Joseph to show that Jesus is born in the line of King David, as the Jewish Christ/King was expected to be. Yet on the other hand we are told that actually Jesus' father is God and his mother a virgin, motifs taken from the Osiris-Dionysus myth. **By placing these contradictory accounts side by side, the gospel writers made clear, for "those with ears to hear", the dual mythic identity of Jesus.**

**By combining the Jewish Messiah with the Pagan Godman, Jewish Gnostics must have felt they were creating the ultimate mystical superhero. They were also, as is characteristic of Gnostics, openly challenging their own Literalist tradition. Jewish Literalists were anxiously awaiting an historical Messiah, who was expected to be a warrior king sent by their tribal deity Jehovah to free them from domination by the Romans. By syncretizing the figure of the Jewish Messiah with the Pagan dying and resurrecting Godman, Jewish Gnostics were not only making Pagan wisdom more readily available to Jews but were also presenting Jews with an entirely different vision of their Messiah!!!**

The **Gnostic Jesus does not come to bring political salvation, but mystical enlightenment.** He does not lead victorious armies, but dies as a common criminal, which to Jewish Literalists was offensive heresy. Like the Gnostics themselves, he is a free-thinker who breaks the rules, embraces society's outsiders and ridicules the ecclesiastical authorities for their ignorance. By creating and popularizing the Jesus myth, Jewish Gnostics were doing what Gnostics always do - they were confronting the status quo and presenting their own radically alternative vision of life as a journey towards Gnosis and the knowledge of our true selves: **That we as God's creation are but vessels for "the Christ" to live and provide the opportunity for relationship and communion with the Creator.**





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## AWAKENING TO "THE CHRIST" WITHIN YOU

At the heart of the enduring philosophy of Gnosticism is a simple but powerful idea. It is the idea of God as a Conscious Intelligence which contains the cosmos and which is becoming conscious of itself through all conscious beings within the cosmos.

*Acts 17:28 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being...(KJV)*

The purpose of Gnostic initiation is to awaken in us a recognition of this our shared divine essence.

The Pagan Gnostics mythically represented the idea of the one Consciousness of God that is conscious in all by the image of the "King". The "King" is a ubiquitous symbol of the self. Plotinus, for example, writes:

"Consciousness is the King. And we are also the King when we are transformed into the King" (Plotinus, Enn., 5.3.3-4)

Based on this Pagan image the original Christians created the image of the "Christ" which, as we seen previously, is equivalent in meaning to "King". We saw this concept when we saw that the word for "Christ" meant to be anointed or smeared with oil; a practice used only for Kings, Priests, and Prophets. Paul describes Christ as "the consciousness of God" in Rom. 8.9:

*Rom 8:9 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (KJV)*

Paul teaches that we are all Christ's body. We are all linked together as beings possessing Souls; we are all linked together in the One Consciousness of God. God literally lives and experiences the realm of "matter" through His creation of souls.

*1 Cor 3:16 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (KJV)*

The purpose of Gnostic initiation as practiced by the earliest Christians is to awaken in us a recognition of this our shared essence; namely, that the Divine Spark of the Universe lives within us and animates us and lives through us.

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

Here we find Paul teaching the very depths of the Gnostic mystery. Is is calling his hearers to become aware of the God that lives within them and enter relationship with the Creator of the Cosmos that literally lives within this clay bodies. Based on this Pagan image the original Christians created the image of "the Christ" which, is equivalent in meaning to "the King". Paul describes Christ as the "consciousness of God" and teaches that we are all Christ's body.

*Col 1:24 24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Remember the myth of the dying-rising Godman? We always thought that this was "literal" but now we have seen than the Ancients and earliest Gnostic Christians understood this myth as "allegorical." Likewise they saw in the "allegorical" understanding of the Exodus myth the same death and resurrection as applied to Moses and the rising up of a "new" Moses in the form of Joshua-Jesus. This same metamorphosis as taken from the Old Testament was applied by proto-Christians and the earliest Gnostic Christians in the Joshua-Jesus of the New Testament times. We see this in the similar analogy of the death and resurrection of Joshua-Jesus. As Moses crossed the Red Sea before his death so likewise the earliest Christians equated the same as applying to the baptism of new converts as they received "Gnosis" of "the Christ" within them (that they were the temple of the living God). Experiencing this "Gnosis" was like a "death" to the old man only to be followed with a "resurrection" of the "new man" within (attaining the new spiritual awareness of whom they really were...vessels of clay in which the Creator lived within); now aware of "the Christ" (Logos-Sophia-Holy Spirit) within their body. All of this again was understood allegorically by the earliest Christians.

*Rom 6:3-4 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death (death of our old nature and ignorance of whom we truly are...made in the image of God): that like as Christ was raised up from the dead (like the myths of the dying godmen...we experience a new life through the knowledge of our true selves and that God lives within us...therefore we are motivated to live holy) by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (KJV)*

This is the meaning of the often misunderstood passage above from Rom. 6:3-4. Paul, a Gnostic, was speaking in Gnostic allegorical terms which we have tried to understand and interpret literally today. Thus we have sought for and arrived at erroneous interpretations of this verse because we never approached it with the understanding that the authentic Pauline literature (like Romans) is the very heart of Gnosticism and needs to be interpreted in this fashion. Above Paul is speaking of a person coming to the awareness of "the Christ" within as a process of "death" and "rebirth" of self. We are "baptized into union with him"; "the Christ", through Gnostic initiation and knowledge of "the Christ" within. Thus once coming to this knowledge:

*Gal 3:28 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

The goal is for all mankind to understand that they are the sons and daughters of God. If we replace the word "King" in the previous passage from Plotinus with the Jewish synonym "Christ", we can see just how similar Pagan and Christian teachings are:

"Consciousness is the Christ. And we are also Christ when we are transformed into the Christ."

Pagan and Christian Gnostics imagined the initiatory journey to be about awakening the King within. In the Pagan Mysteries, the initiate was "enthroned" as a king as part of the initiation ceremonies. The "enthronement" of the initiate, or new convert, was a ritual carried out in the Pagan Mysteries (J. Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion, 1922, p. 514). Pagan Gnostics of the Cynic school called the realized initiate a "King" in the "Kingdom of God" (E. Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle: Did Christianity Begin With A Mythical Christ?, 1999, p. 160). Likewise, Christian Gnostics taught that when we realize Gnosis we will become "self-ruled" kings in the Kingdom of God and "reign over the All". They imagined the triumphant Christian initiate crowned with a halo of light, declaring: "The light has become a crown on my head" (*Pistis Sophia*, 1.59).



**It is time that the truth and accurate interpretation of the Pauline corpus of literature be understood correctly as the original hearers understood it over two thousand years ago. It is not right that we give another meaning to these epistles and thereby lose the Spiritual Dynamic intended.**



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# THE CHRIST AS A RISING DYING GOD...HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS?

**Answer for yourself:** Is Jesus and his depiction in the Gospel story in any way parallel to the savior myths that were current in the time when he lived?

## THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT CONCEPTS REGARDING THE DYING AND RISING SAVIOR GOD

It seems safe to say that there were at least two kinds of myths pertaining to the dying and rising savior god, both of them influenced by and influencing early Christianity.

### MYSTERY RELIGIONS

One kind of myth is an aspect of "mystery religion." It was an ecstatic, sometimes orgiastic kind of religion, in which secret rites, especially of initiation, opened the door for a sense of elemental participation in the constantly reiterated rhythm of death and rebirth, a cycle that binds man and all organic nature together. In ritual reiteration we sense our kinship with the fertility of nature, with the mysterious loss and renewal of her strength, and with the pulsating life flowing in both nature and ourselves. The ritual killing of an innocent animal victim and being sprinkled with his blood, the sexual orgy, the dance, are some of the ways by which the primordial unity of all nature is represented and enacted. At the level of mythological representation, this primordial renewal is mirrored in the story of the dying and rising savior god.

### GNOSTICISM

But there was at least one other, much more individualistic and sophisticated form of the dying and rising savior myth. Its endlessly proliferated varieties are gathered together under the collective heading of Gnosticism. The mythical accounts of the Gnostic savior's death and rising are usually precise, detailed, and allegorical, involving the personification of abstract ideas like "truth," "depth," and "creator." Here myth functions in a far more deliberate way than in the mystery religions. In other words, the function of "myth" is not to be understood in a "literal" fashion; instead such "myths" server as a reflective, intellectual pointer to something else, mysterious and hidden in the depths of the self.

The myth in Gnosticism is not, as it is in mystery religions, the celebration in story form or in the form of a "play" portraying the immediate unity of life in nature and man. Instead, it is more nearly designed to evoke a kind of interior insight; a reflection within to the very depth of self. The Gnostic "myths" are intended to help the "believer" find within himself the very "Creator" and His purpose wrapped up in one's life. These teachings of Gnosticism have very little in common with Christianity as it is understood today since it approaches "the Christ" from a "literalist" perspective instead of an "allegorical" perspective



**as did these earliest Gnostic Christians.** Above the ancient Pagan sanctuary at Delphi were written the words "*Know your Self.*" According to Plato, it was the Delphic command "Gnothi seauton" which set Socrates on his quest for truth & knowledge (Plato, Apology, 22e-23c). This injunction was seen as the fundamental challenge of Gnosticism by Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Gnostics alike. **For Plato the Delphic proverb meant the knowledge of the divine spirit, "nous," in man. For later Jewish Gnostics self-knowledge became synonymous with the Gnosis itself.**

The Christian Gnostic Clement of Alexandria writes: "*The greatest of all lessons is to know your Self, for when a man knows himself he knows God*" (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 3.1). **Self-knowledge and knowledge of God are the same thing, because our shared essential identity is God.** We humans, as souls entrapped in this body of flesh and matter, are the one Consciousness of God believing itself to be many separate persons. This required the looking within beyond the exterior of our flesh to find **our very essence which is God incarnated in each of us. For these early Gnostic Christians, the quest for self-knowledge is identical with the quest to know God, because when we discover our deepest identity, we discover we are God tabernacling within flesh.** In the Gnostic text Allogenes we read: "If you seek with a perfect seeking, then you shall know the Good (God) that is in you; then you will know yourself as well, [as] one who derives from God who truly pre-exists" (NHC, 11.3.56, in Robinson, J. M., *The Nag Hammadi Library*, Harper San Francisco, paperback edition, 1978). **The Gnostics rejected the "literalistic" concept of God as some sort of omnipotent patriarch who is boss of the cosmos. For the Gnostics, however, God is omnipresent Consciousness within which everything exists as an idea. Plato said the same thing! This One Universal Consciousness which is God expresses itself through all conscious beings.** So although we may be seen to be separate individuals, as Plotinus teaches, as the innermost depths (Plotinus, *Enneads*. 6.8.18) of each of us "there is Consciousness, unchanging and the same (Armstrong, K., *A History of God*, Mandarin, 1993). In other words it is the same God that lives within and animates us all. **This is our shared essential identity as mankind created in the image of God. The goal of such Gnosticism, as expressed by the earliest Christians and Paul is to realize that we all are the very expression of God in His physical creation and a variety of manifestations of God's Consciousness and that everyone of us is to be the very expression of God in the world.** Moses said it this way:

*Lev 20:7 7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. (KJV)*

Paul, himself a Gnostic, said it this way:

*Gal 4:19 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (KJV)*

**The figure of "the Christ" represents this one Consciousness of God which is our shared essential identity.** And this "Christ" dwells within each of us. Sadly not all of mankind was aware of this Divine Truth and the true origin of their being.

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

We are all members of this body of "Christ" in this allegorical sense (I Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:30).

*1 Cor 12:27 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (KJV)*

*Eph 5:30 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (KJV)*

Paul goes on to explain that there is one Consciousness and one body (Eph. 4:4).

**Eph 4:4 4 There is one body (of Cosmic Consciousness to which the Christ resides within...the human species), and one Spirit, even as ye are called (to awaken to the fact of the Christ dwelling within you) in one hope of your calling; (KJV)**

**Again the Gnostic Paul intended that these concepts be understood "allegorically and not literally."**

**Answer for yourself:** Ever heard of the "Logos"? Have you been taught that this Logos is a human being? Well such a teaching is wrong and a perversion of the "literalization" of a Divine concept which was always understood by the Ancients as an "allegory" of "the Christ" within mankind.

**Pagan and Christian Gnostics call the one Consciousness in all of us the Logos.** The Gospel of John equates Jesus with the Logos that is "the true light which illuminates everyone who comes into the world" (John 1:9).

**John 1:9 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (KJV)**

Hermes Trismegistus explains:

**"That in you which sees and hears is the Logos of the Lord. It is the Consciousness of God the Father"** (Corpus Hermeticum, I. The Poimandres, trans. Nock and Pestugiere. Welburn, A. (1994), 195).

Clement of Alexandria elucidates the idea that **Jesus is the "Son of God"** by explaining, **"The Son is the Consciousness of the Father."** **For Clement of Alexandria Jesus was the epitome of Godliness in a manifestation as if flesh and best represented the God "ideal" among men; not that Jesus was God in a "literal sense" as we have been taught by the Roman "literalist" interpretation. For him, and other early Gnostic Christians, Jesus represented the potential for Consciousness made actual in every conscious being.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are we to understand this New Testament appearance of Jesus or the Logos as a human form? Did the Logos appear as a fleshly man or did it just appear as such and we today possible don't understand correctly this Divine concept when reading the Gospel of John when he says "the word (Logos) became flesh" as well as other passages in the New Testament concerning "the Christ?"

**Rom 8:3 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (KJV)**

**Answer for yourself:** Do you understand what Paul is saying in this verse?

**Strong's Concordance:**

**3667 homoioma (hom-oy'-o-mah); from 3666; a form; abstractly, resemblance: KJV-- made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.**

**Thayers's Concordance**

**3667 homoioma- what has been made after the likeness of something a) a figure, a image, a likeness, a representation b) likeness that is, resemblance, such as amounts almost to equality or identity**

These words are very illuminating as to whether the appearance of "the Christ" or "the Logos" among flesh was "actually" a human being or only a representative of a human being. Read these words again and think.

To know God and the Mystery of God, we must come to know our shared identity which is **symbolized by Jesus**. Hence in The Gospel of John Jesus teaches: **"No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6)**



which is to be understood originally as an allegory of the way and pattern of life Jesus adopted and lived out before mankind in perfect Torah obedience. For the original Christians, however, it did not mean that the only way to God is to be a Christian, in the exclusive cultish sense of the word as Rome has interpreted it for the world; but by the way and manner of life exemplified by Jesus who let the "Christ/anointing" within lead his life. Said more simply the way to God is via his Son, the Logos which resides within each man and woman.

Paul the Gnostic teaches: *"The Son is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).*

The Gospel of John states: *"No one has ever seen the Father, but God's Son, who is nearest to the essence of the Father, has made him known" (John. 1:18).*

The "Son" being the Logos that the depiction of Jesus in the New Testament is shown to have surrendered to in his life through perfect Torah obedience; the Commandments of God being understood as 248 positive actions that reveal Whom God is and does and 365 negative actions that reveal Whom God is not and does not do. Jesus is depicted as the perfect example of one who adopts such actions with supreme dedication before his peers in such a way that they saw in such conduct the perfect expression of the Logos among men (the Logos being the expression of the mind of God).

*The Christian message from these Gnostics is that we are spiritually dead and need to resurrect to our true identity, which is the earthly expression of this "Christ/God" instead of surrendering our body members to the rule of the flesh which opposes the Logos.*

Yet this insight is not simple and capable of straightforward intellectual representation. Far more than an explanatory scheme, the insight is the process of the discovery of a certain awareness -- the awareness of the Divine harmony that existed with God in the beginning which was disrupted by our birth into mortal flesh which is only regained at our death.

*Rom 7:24-25 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...(KJV)*

We are actually in a curious position in undertaking such an account of Gnosticism.

- First, there is the endless diversity of Gnostic types, not easily brought under a common heading.
- Secondly, the experts are by no means agreed as to whether or not the motif of the redeemer, both in need of redemption and redeemed as well as redeeming, is central for Gnosticism.
- Finally, just because the Gnostics seem to have seen myth as the indispensable expression and not as the imperfect shape of true thought -- understood as interior personal meaning -- they do not provide us with an interpretative "clue" by which the myth may be grasped. Obviously, they would think that the only way for us to understand what they were about is to learn the same insights they had, no matter how we may express them with our own symbols and myths.

But let us, until better instructed in Gnostic wisdom, assume that something of Gnostic thinking can be described and that the dying and rising savior or redeemed-redeemer motif is indeed part of that structure of the Gnostic concept of self-awareness of the Christ within and our moral and ethical responsibilities that go with such self revelation.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it, then, similar to the death and resurrection story in the Gospels where we find Christ Jesus both dying and resurrecting? Is this death and resurrection after 3 days of the archetypal man depicted as Jesus to be understood "literally" or "spiritually"? For those uncertain we only need remind you of the

Winter Solstice where the "Sun" stands still 3 days and fights the Evil Darkness of Winter only to be raised from the dead after 3 days on December 25th, the birthday of all the Sun gods and Sun godmen. This "Darkness" which primitive man understood as "Evil" become shortened over time to a theological concept that all should be familiar with today. This "Dark Evil" become the "D-Evil" or the "Devil". **Well without a doubt now this is not to be understood "literally" as we have been instructed by Rome in their forged Gospels but as the Gnostics always taught: the awakening of the Christ within mankind and his soul.**

Certainly the possibility described cannot be denied, just as the pattern of mystery religion also shows significant parallels to early Christianity which were later interpreted "literally" instead of "allegorically".





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# GNOSTICISM AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOD-SPIRIT WITHIN YOU

*The Kingdom of Heaven is within you and whoever knows himself shall find it. Know your Self.*  
Jesus, Oxyrhynchus Manuscript, 654, 9-21.

Above the ancient Pagan sanctuary at Delphi were written the words "Know your Self". For Plato the Delphic proverb meant the knowledge of the divine spirit, nous, in man. In other words Plato teaches us the highest spiritual experience known to man: Know the Spirit of God that lives within you! This injunction was seen as the fundamental challenge of Gnosticism by Pagan, Jewish and Christian Gnostics alike. The "Gnosis" or "Knowledge" that the Gnostics sought was self-knowledge of who they really were, where they had come from and to where they were to return at their death. Their spiritual quest was to answer the most obvious of mysteries, which continually confronts each one of us: "Who am I?" Who are we as humans?"

If we can grasp the Gnostics' teachings about who we really are, then the meaning of the Christian myths of Jesus and "the Christ" will become clear. These teachings of the earliest Gnostic Christians have little in common with Christianity as it is generally understood and taught today.

The earliest Gnostic Christians understood a human being as having three aspects: body, soul, and spirit. The ancients called the physical body "physis" from which we get our word "physical". This is our outer self. The ancients called the soul the "psyche." The psyche soul was our "inner self". For the Gnostics it is a deeper level of our identity than the body. At the centre is our essential identity, which the ancients called pneuma or nous. Pneuma is usually translated as "spirit", but today the word has become almost meaningless. Nous is translated "intellect", but this is misleading as we now associate the word "intellect" purely with rational thought, where nous is the witness of all experiences, whatever their quality. It is that which is within us that "knows". It is the sense of being within every human being. It is who we are. A more appropriate modern translation for both pneuma and nous is "Consciousness". The great revelation of Gnosticism is that our essential identity is Consciousness...the Consciousness of God is within us.

## THE ONE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE COSMOS...GOD..WITHIN US

The Christian Gnostic Clement of Alexandria writes: *"The Greatest of all lessons is to know your Self, for when a man knows himself he knows God"* (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 3.1) (L.H. Martin, *The Hellenistic Religions*, 1987, p. 141). For the Gnostics, the quest for self-knowledge is identical with the quest to know God, because when we discover our deepest identity, we discover we ARE GOD!

*John 10:34 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? (KJV)*

**For the Gnostics God is omnipresent Consciousness within which everything exists as an idea.** Some understand the term better when they envision **God as The Intelligent Energy-Mind of the Cosmos.** A term we hear today is "Cosmic Consciousness" which best expresses this Ancient idea. Cosmic Consciousness is an ultra high state of illumination in the human Mind that is beyond that of "self-awareness," and "ego-awareness." In the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness, the human Mind has entered a state of Knowledge instead of mere beliefs, a state of "I know," instead of "I believe." This state of Mind is beyond that of the sense reasoning in that it has attained an awareness of the Universe and its relation to being and **a recognition of the Oneness in all things** that is not easily shared with others who have not personally experienced this state of Mind.

This Consciousness in each human is the true "Higher Self." This "Higher Self" or internal Consciousness within each human is but one part of the whole of the entirety of the Infinite Spirit of God (the totality of the Cosmic Consciousness of God). **This Cosmic intelligent Consciousness (Spirit of God) manifests life (His life) in all of us and all living entities of the lower and higher planes. The "I" within all of us is but one manifestation of the Cosmic Mind of God.**

**This "Cosmic Mind of God"; this Nous - Spirit - Cosmic Consciousness lives within us. It is Eternal and indestructible and mortality and immortality is not an issue in its existence. There is no force in existence capable of destroying the "I" that lives within us. This "I" or "Higher Self" is our soul - spirit and it is connected to "the All" (God). Therefore within each person resides that part of God that makes him a creation which is created in the Image of this Creator.** All of us are created in the image of God without any exceptions or exclusions and none can escape its omnipresent infinite living Mind of God that lives within us and gives us our unique identity. **There is no "existence" outside of the All of God.**

**Answer for yourself:** Will you take a minute and reflect upon what has been said?

This one universal Consciousness expresses itself through all conscious beings. So, although we all seem to be separate individuals, as Plotinus teaches (Plotinus, *Enn.*, 6.8.18), **at the innermost depths of each of us "there is one Consciousness, unchanging and the same"** (K. Armstrong, *A History of God*, 1993, p. 123). This is our shared identity as part of the Cosmos and God's Universe and Creation. It is the hidden root of the tree of which we are all branches (Plotinus, op. cit., 3.3.7). **The Gnostics teach that we are as human beings each a manifestation of the one Consciousness of God; many parts making up the whole. We call this the body of "the Christ" (Christ being that part of God which He used in the actual creation of matter). Our consciousness is the one Consciousness of God** (Plotinus, op. cit., 6.9.8). The one Consciousness of God appears to be many individual consciousness; each made in and reflecting the image of God our Creator. **We as the zenith of God's Creation appear as individual beings yet we are manifestations of the universal Being the Gnostics call God.**

Before we are born as a physical body we exist as consciousness and psyche (spirit and soul). When we are born we bring into manifestation the denser level of our psyche (physical).

Plotinus teaches: The experience we call birth is the coming into being of the lower phase of the psyche which we call the physical body" (Plotinus, op. cit., 1.1.12).

As newborn babies we have no concept of who we are and where we have come from and how we existed before our physical incarnation in the realm of matter. **Plato tells us the "real" is in the invisible realm of the pure Spirit which he calls God and that what we see in the physical realm is but a shadow of the real (THINK)**

*Exod 25:8-9 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (KJV)*



**Heb 8:5 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. (KJV)**

Plato and other Gnostics have it right. The "real" is in another dimension and we see only the "shadows" and "reflections" of the truth which resides with God in the realm of pure Spirit - Energy. The "bridge" for mankind between these two realms is through the agent - mediator from God... "the Christ - Logos - Sophia - Chokmah - Holy Spirit" and these by whatever name dwell within mankind. They are the Consciousness of God that live within this temple made without hands.

Lacking this knowledge we therefore come to conceptualize ourselves as who everyone says we are - the visible body. But that is not who we truly are. We identify with how we appear to others, rather than how we are for ourselves. The Gnostics call our apparent identity the *eidolon*, which means "image". The *eidolon*, like a reflection in a mirror, is **who we appear to be, but not who we really are.** In modern spiritual jargon the *eidolon* is the "ego". In the Christian text *Pistis Sophia*, it is called the "counterfeit consciousness". (Quoted: *Pistis Sophia*, 1.39.6) "I have become like a peculiar demon, which dwells in matter, in whom is no light". Basilides calls it the "parasitic psyche". Plotinus calls it "the intruder". Our word "idea" - an image in the mind - comes from the same root as the word *eidolon*. The *eidolon* is the "I am the body" idea. **We have identified ourselves with this idea, rather than the Consciousness within which the idea arises. We have mistaken the image for the essence.**

This is the tragi-comedy of the human predicament. **We are all God, but most of us think of ourselves as a somewhat common person.** When we identify with the body, we attempt to gratify and protect the particular person we mistake ourselves to be. We seek what is good for this limited idea of who we are, regardless of the consequences to others and the entirety. Thus the wise, loving, impersonal presence that is the Mystery of God becomes an ignorant, selfish, separate person.

**The Gnostic path of self-knowledge is discovering that the *eidolon* is not our true Self and progressively becoming aware of our essential nature as a manifestation of God's Consciousness.**

The Gnostics teach that this is a journey of many lifetimes. Just as each night we go to sleep to wake up reinvigorated the next day, so at the end of a lifetime we die and reincarnate, manifesting ourselves as a new body in the world, the wiser for our previous experience. In this way, life by life, we progressively move further along the road of realization.

**Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ (Logos - Sophia - Chokmah - Holy Spirit) in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)**

## THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The Gnostics divide human beings into categories according to their level of self-awareness. Paul, Valentinus and other Christians use the terms *hylics*, *psychics* and *pneumatics*.

- ***Hylics*, or "materialists", identify themselves with the body.**
- ***Psychics*, or "soulists", identify with the psyche or soul.**
- ***Pneumatics*, or "spiritists", are aware of themselves as spirit or Consciousness.**

**In Pagan, Jewish and Christian Gnostic traditions there are two basic stages of initiation which lead initiates progressively through these states of being.**

- **Christians called the first the *psychic* or "soul" initiation, because it initiates the journey from**

being a *hylic* to becoming a *psychic*.

- The second the *pneumatic* or "spirit" initiation, because it initiates the journey from being a *psychic* to becoming a *pneumatic*.

This might sound complicated because of the new terminology but it is not. We call this simply "spiritual maturity."

*Psychic* initiates were taught the exoteric teachings or Outer Mysteries of Gnosticism, which were openly available to all those interested in joining a particular Gnostic school (a literalistic interpretation). *Pneumatic* initiates went on to be taught the secret esoteric teachings or Inner Mysteries (an allegorical interpretation on a deeper level).

Let us not forget what we learned in previous articles; namely how the *Joshua-Jesus allegory* was interpreted and taught "literally" by Rome in their refutation of the Gnostic allegorical interpretation of "the Christ." As we are seeing there are two basic ways to interpret the Jesus Myth of the New Testament:

- *Psychic* - *Soulish* - physical - literally
- *Pneumatic* - Spiritually - allegorically

Let us remember that it was the allegorical Gnostics (*pneumatics*) that gave us the First New Testament and not the literalistic (*Soulish*) Roman Catholic Church which would destroy it. Literalist Christianity is the product of *psychic* (*Soulish*) initiates, uninitiated into the Inner Mysteries, thereby making a religion out of the Outer Mysteries. This is why the secret *pneumatic* teachings of Christianity, which we are exploring, seem so remote from Christianity as it is generally understood today.

The *pneumatic* teachings were kept a secret because the spiritually immature can easily be so baffled that they dismiss them as incomprehensible nonsense. *Psychic* initiates were not taught the secret Inner Mysteries for the same reason that we do not tell children the secrets of sexuality until they are old enough to understand them. Such knowledge too early is simply confusing and could even be harmful. The Christian master Ptolemy explains: "These things are not openly spoken of, for not all people are ready for Gnosis" (Ptolemy, quoted in Irenaeus, op. cit., 1.3.1; B. Layton, The Gnostic Scriptures, 1987, p. 286).

Paul states:

*"Psychics don't grasp things which concern the Consciousness of God. They seem like foolishness to them, because they are pneumatically (spiritually) discerned. Pneumatics, (Gnostics) however, understand everything" 1 Corinthians 2:14*

*Psychic* initiates can also easily misinterpret *pneumatic* teachings. That is an understatement. The danger with telling those who are still completely enmeshed in identification with the *eidolon* (only aware of whom we appear to be, but not who we really are) that they are really God (that we as human beings are actually a manifestation of the Creative Spirit of God trapped with this physical body - matter) is that this will lead to inflation rather than transcendence. The ego starts to believe it is the Lord of the Universe. The history of religion is full of such ego-mania passed off as spirituality.

## SOUL INITIATION

Although today the words "spirit" and "soul" are used interchangeably, for the ancients the conceptual differentiation between spirit and soul was the foundation of the initiatory structure underlying Gnostic spirituality.



- The psychic or soul initiation was about exploring soul - experience.
- The pneumatic or spirit initiation was about discovering the experienter - spirit/Consciousness, the ground of all experience.

Together these two levels of initiation created the conditions for the realization of Gnosis, which was their common fulfillment.

**Answer for yourself:** How did the Gnostics teach that this whole process begins?

The process of awakening starts with an experience the original Christians called *metanoia*. This term, which is found throughout the New Testament, is traditionally translated "**repentance**", a word now so loaded with religious connotations that it is difficult to hear what it really means. *Metanoia* is not about apologizing to God for breaking the rules or about performing prescribed penitential acts. It means "a change of heart".

It is deep dissatisfaction with the way we have been and the sincere desire to be different. It is the turning-point in our lives, when we realize we can't go on investing in our separate ego, because we intuitively know that life is actually about spiritual awakening. *Metanoia* is the signal that we are ready to embark on the process of soul initiation.

*Matt 4:17 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (KJV)*

*Rom 6:13 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (KJV)*

The passage in Matt. 4:17 above is a call to begin "soul initiation" in Gnostic thought. Paul concurs. Christians called this first step in spiritual maturity the *psychic* or "soul" initiation, because it initiates the journey from being a *hylic* (a person consumed by his physical body and physical environment and fleshly lusts) to becoming a *psychic* (one who is beginning to discover the essence of the Divine within him).

*Gal 5:16 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (KJV)*

Dionysius describes this stage of initiation as being about "purification" (Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works, 1987, p. 72). Both Pagans and Christians marked this soul initiation with a "baptism" - an initiation ritual involving immersion with water, symbolizing being cleansed. During this stage of initiation, initiates are instructed in ethics, which teaches them to live a good and selfless life and so helps them to gradually purify themselves of the selfish ego and fleshly lusts.

The *psychic* initiate understands self-knowledge to be about earnestly examining our faults and failings, so that we can become a better person. To use modern spiritual jargon, the *psychic* initiation is primarily about "personal growth" through "working on ourselves". The underlying purpose is to lessen our identification with the *eidolon* (who we think we are instead of whom we truly are) so that we can transcend it altogether in the *pneumatic* or spirit initiation.

*Psychic* initiates understand the injunction "Know your Self" as the call to personal self-knowledge: "Know what your personality is like." *Pneumatic* initiates hear it afresh, as meaning: "**Know who you really are.**" The *psychic* or soul initiation is about working on ourselves to become a better person. It is here we see the benefit of the Torah for its instruction into how to live and how not to live as a *psychic* believer.

The *pneumatic* or spirit initiation is about coming to understand that we are not a person at all. We as

**human beings are really individual manifestations of the Consciousness of God...God's Spirit within flesh (matter).**

## SPIRIT INITIATION

The Pagan Gnostics call the two levels of initiation *catharmos*, meaning "purification", and *paradosis*, meaning "transmission". **In the first stage initiates are purified through ethical teachings (Torah).** The second stage of initiation involves the transmission of esoteric philosophy (H. Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, 1958, p. 61).

Today the word "philosophy" is associated with dry academic theories, but the ancients did not see it in this way. **For the Gnostics and early Christian Gnostics, philosophy was not an intellectual exercise. It was a spiritual practice.**

**Philosophy is a rigorous examination of the mysteries of who we are and what life is.** It questions our deepest assumptions and fundamentally changes how we perceive ourselves and our lives. **It is a process of using the reasoning mind, which is an aspect of psyche, to guide us beyond thoughts altogether, to Consciousness itself.** It dispenses the confusion which obscures the Mystery of God. Clement of Alexandria teaches:

***"Philosophy purges the psyche and prepares it for Gnosis"*** (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, 6.26, 7.55 and 6.109).

Fear of death is often what motivates spiritual exploration. The quest for self-knowledge is the search for a deeper identity which can survive physical death. *The Gospel of Thomas* opens with the promise: ***"Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death."*** When we enter the state of contemplation, this is exactly what we discover. The process of *pneumatic* initiation is "the purification of the unbornness", as the Christian Gnostic Zostrianos puts it with startling clarity (Zostrianos, NHC, 8.75.23; A. Welburn, *Gnosis, the Mysteries and Christianity*, 1994, p. 171). **At the end of this process we realize we are Consciousness itself, which will witness the death of the body, as it witnessed its birth, but which can never die, because it (this Consciousness of God) was never born.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are you ready for a big revelation?

In the Greek used by the original Christians, the word usually translated as "salvation" also means "preservation". "To be saved" is "to be preserved", or "made permanent" (Layton, op. cit., p. 294; Layton's commentary on Irenaeus, *AH*, 1.6.2). **When the original Christians talk about "being saved", they are talking about realizing the permanence of our essential nature. When we discover we are the permanent presence of God's Consciousness existing in matter (fleshly bodies) only temporarily we know that we are truly safe.**

***This is the hidden mystery that Gnostic taught and revealed through the stages of Soul and Spirit initiation...as had the Pagan Mysteries before them.....since Egypt***

***Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)***

***Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)***

***Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among***



*the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

## THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD

The Gnostic path of self-knowledge can be thought of as a journey to God, for it comes to the same thing. Hermes Trismegistus, the legendary Egyptian sage whose mystical works were studied by the original Christians, teaches:

*Pure philosophy is spiritual striving through constant contemplation to attain Gnosis of God* (quoted in Freke and Gandy, *Hermetica*, p. 29. *Asclepius* 13).

The process of initiation changes initiates' understanding of God. In truth, they are God, but while this is unknown, they experience only a lower understanding of their true being. While they think of themselves only in a fleshly existence their understanding of God is in impersonal terms. In the realization of Gnosis they finally come to know themselves to be indistinguishable from the Mystery of God.

As an initiate's awareness of God within grows then the idea of whom they truly are is transformed and transformed again. In the psychic stage of initiation they discover that they are not the physical body. In the pneumatic stage of initiation they discover that they are not the personal psyche either. In the realization of Gnosis they understand that they are not self at all. They are the Absolute Mystery of the Cosmos....God living within His creation....the Spirit of the Cosmos entrapped within matter which He animates and gives life and which for God becomes the very vehicle for His experiences (THINK).

The realization of Gnosis is the fulfillment of both the psychic initiation of personal transformation and the pneumatic initiation of personal transcendence. Initiates realize the One of all that is and the complete illusion of their existence as a separate individual. We are all linked and manifestations of the One true God. When this knowledge is imparted to the initiates then this completes the pneumatic initiation of transcendence.

## WHAT ABOUT GOD'S LAWS....HAS THE LAW PASSED AWAY?

Well that depends on whether you again interpret and answer the question "literally" or "allegorically". The Gnostics called the Mystery of God "the Good". They teach that when we realize Gnosis, we will discover that our essential identity is the "Good". We won't need to become good because we are "good". We will spontaneously act as a natural expression of our true being...that we are manifestations of the ultimate Good...the Consciousness of God within created matter (flesh). That being so we need only recognize our true identity and act accordingly.

*Gal 5:16 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (KJV)*

*Gal 5:25 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (KJV)*

*Eph 4:17-24 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them (lack of this Gnostic initiation to one's true self...the Christ within), because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus (the exodus allegory of Joshua-Jesus): 22 That ye put off concerning the former*

*conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

The Gnostic sage Basilides explains that pneumatic Christians (one having received spiritual initiation) are moral simply by nature and quotes Paul's letter to the Romans 2:2-16 in support (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 19). We will no longer identify with who we once thought we were but will only not identity with whom we have come to know we truly are: God in the flesh. We become literally selfless. We will know we are one with all that is. Gnosis is the knowledge that all is One. They understood that essential Oneness is expressed through an infinite potential and a rich variety of life. They came to understand that they were, themselves, the Mystery expressing itself as Consciousness in a witnessing psyche (soul), within which they appeared to be as persons living a life in the world.

Needless to say this is a far cry from what Western Roman Christianity has taught us. That is because they altered the First New Testament of the Gnostic Marcion which contained only the asthenic letters of Paul before they were later edited and changed as well as invented (the anti-Gnostic Pastoral Epistles). As we have seen this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" will be changed by men like Justin and Irenaeus and in its place we have the birth of a human being Christ which never lived. This falsehood is perpetuated by the refutation of the earliest Gnostic Christians and their New Testament and the later production of the "literalistic" Second New Testament which finds endorsement by the emerging Roman Catholic juggernaut and the rest is history. The truths held sacred since Egypt concerning God and His Cosmos let alone His "Christ" were lost to the world and it is only in the last fifty years through the blessings of discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and the Dead Sea Scrolls has the Roman lie of religious history been exposed.





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# THE ESSENCE OF GNOSTIC CHRISTIANITY

We have seen throughout the earlier articles how the original Christians encoded their teachings in their allegorical myths. Lets look at the most important of all Christian mythological figures and what they represents in the light of the philosophy we have been exploring. That figure is, of course, "the Christ".

## THE CHRIST WITHIN US ALL

**"Christ" represented for the earliest Gnostic Christians the one Consciousness of God at the centre of our self which is our essential shared identity with the Ultimate Cosmic Consciousness we call God.** *The Treatise on the Resurrection* sees us "radiating like rays from the Saviour" (*Treatise on the Resurrection*, NHC, 1.4.45; B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*, 1987), 321). **For Paul, "the Christ within" is our common essence.** We are "the members of the body of Christ", *1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:30*).

*1 Cor 12:27 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (KJV)*

*Eph 5:30 30 For we (all) are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (KJV)*

Paul goes on to explain, for in reality "there is one Consciousness and one body" (*Ephesians 4:4*).

*Eph 4:4 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (KJV)*

In *A Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, Paul prays to Jesus, ***"It is you who are my Consciousness." "You are my mind; bring me forth! . . .give me the perfect thing that cannot be grasped!"*** (*A Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, NHC, 1.1.5). Later in the *Prayer* Paul asks to be granted ***"what no angel-eye has seen, and no archon-ear has heard, and what has not entered into the human heart"***

**Answer for yourself:** Sound familiar? (*1 Corinthians 2:9*)

*1 Cor 2:9 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

In *The Gospel of Mary*, BG, 10, Jesus tells Mary: "Blessed are you because you are not shaken when you see me. For where the mind [*nous*] is, there is the treasure." Dionysius urges us to experience "a communion with Jesus who is transcendent Consciousness" (Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 372a; Pseudo-Dionysius, 1987, p. 195; D. Merkur, *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions*, 1993), p. 243).

**Pagan and Christian Gnostics call the one Consciousness in all of us "the Logos"**

On this website we have extensively devoted several articles in order to articulate the truth about "the Logos" and all the nuances concerning it. It would do you well to familiarize yourself with this material at this stage in

your study.

*The Gospel of John* equates Jesus with the *Logos* that is "the true light which illuminates everyone who comes into the world".

*John 1:9 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (KJV)*

Hermes Trismegistus explains:

"That in you which sees and hears is the Logos of the Lord. It is the Consciousness of God the Father." (*Corpus Hermeticum*, 1, *The Poimandres*, trans. Nock and Festugiere; A. Welburn, *Gnosis, The Mysteries and Christianity*, 1994, p. 195).

**Answer for yourself:** What should we have learned from the above statements? We saw earlier has the Cosmic Consciousness of the Creator - Spirit - Intelligent Energy of the Universe lives within each of God's creations. That being the case then understand this Consciousness is also called by other names; namely in this instance "the Logos". The Logos of God dwells not only in one supposed person named Jesus in the New Testament but within you the reader as well!!!

Clement of Alexandria elucidates the idea that Jesus is the "Son of God" by explaining, "The Son is the Consciousness of the Father" (Quoted in W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 87). According to Hippolytus, Marcus the Gnostic received the following revelation: *"When first the self-existent Father, He who is inconceivable and without substance, He who is neither male nor female, willed that His own ineffability should become realized in something spoken, and that His invisibility should become realized in form, He opened His mouth, and sent forth similar to Himself a Logos. And this (Logos) stood by Him, and showed unto Him who he was, viz., that he himself had been manifested as a (realization in) form of the Invisible One"* (Hippolytus, *Ref.*, 6.37 (translator's brackets)).

The Father is the Mystery - the dazzling darkness of unconscious Consciousness. Joshua-Jesus represents the potential for Consciousness made actual in every conscious being. The Christian master Marcus has Jesus declare:

"I am the Son of the Father who is beyond all existence. While I, his Son, am in existence" (Hippolytus, quoted in G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments Of A Faith Forgotten*, 1906), p. 381).

To know the Mystery of God, we must come to know our shared identity, which is symbolized by Joshua-Jesus. Hence in *The Gospel of John* Jesus teaches:

*John 14:6 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (KJV)*

This phrase is endlessly misinterpreted and has probably been the source of more bigotry than any other religious dogma.

**Answer for yourself:** Did the earliest Christians believe that belief in Christ Jesus was the only way to God? No!

*Acts 10:34-35 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (KJV)*

For the original Christians, however, it does not mean that the only way to God is to be a Christian, in the exclusive cultish sense of the word.



It is important that you clear your head and make the following connection correctly. The Gospel of John equates Jesus with "the Logos." **We have seen that the "Logos" has many other names: Sophia, Chokmah, Holy Spirit, Son of God, etc.** We just saw that not only did the Ancients (Hermes Trismegistus, Plato, Philo, etc) but the early Gnostic Christians as well understood that the Consciousness of God whom they called "the Logos" dwells within mankind. This is important to make this connection before we go on.

As *The Gospel of John* makes clear from its introduction, which equates Jesus with the *Logos*, ***"No one comes to the Father but by me"***.

**Answer for yourself:** What could this mean?

**Simply said it means that the way to the Mystery of God is via his Son, the Logos (the mediator between Spirit and matter which resides in you!!!).** Paul teaches:

***Col 1:15 15 Who (the Son) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (KJV)***

Origen writes: ***"The Lord and Saviour is the image of the invisible God."*** (In *Lucem homila*, 8, quoted in Jung, *Aion*, CW, 9.2, para 70.) *The Gospel of John* states:

***John 1:18 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son (Logos), which is in the bosom of the Father, he (the only begotten Son ... the Logos) hath declared him. (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** To whom does this **indwelling Son of God**...this Sophia...this Chokmah...this Holy Spirit...this Logos declare this invisible God?

***You!***

We know the Mystery through its manifestation as Consciousness that dwells within us and communes with the Father within us. This is the spiritual initiation that Gnostic Christianity taught in the First New Testament of Marcion in 140 C.E. Needless to say this is a far cry from what Western Roman Christianity has taught us. That is because they altered the First New Testament of the Gnostic Marcion which contained only the asthenic letters of Paul before they were later edited and changed as well as invented (the anti-Gnostic Pastoral Epistles). As we have seen this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" will be changed by men like Justin and Irenaeus and in its place we have the birth of a human being Christ which never lived. This falsehood is perpetuated by the refutation of the earliest Gnostic Christians and their New Testament and the later production of the "literalistic" Second New Testament which finds endorsement by the emerging Roman Catholic juggernaut and the rest is history. The truths held sacred since Egypt concerning God and His Cosmos let alone His "Christ" were lost to the world and it is only in the last fifty years through the blessings of discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and the Dead Sea Scrolls has the Roman lie of religious history been exposed.

## **RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD..."LITERAL" OR "ALLEGORICAL"?**

Having understood the symbolic nature of the Christ, we are now in a position to understand the most important motif in Christian mythology, which the original Christians used to express the essence of their message. This is the **image of the resurrected Christ, which represents the realization of Gnosis. In the Greek language, in which they wrote, the word for resurrection, *anastasis*, also means "awakening", so the idea that resurrection represents spiritual awakening was obvious.** For

*anastasis* as "awakening", (K. Rudolph, Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism, 1987, p. 190). **The "resurrection of Christ" symbolically represents "awakening the Christ within".**

Take a moment and reflect and let the realization of this truth sink in. When you pick up the authentic Pauline Epistles and read about the resurrection of Christ then understand that in metaphor and allegory Paul was preaching to his students a message of their repentance and awakening to the fact that God dwells within them and because of this revelation of truth then they are not to yield their bodies any longer as instruments of unrighteousness.

*Rom 6:13 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice the sly mention of being "alive from the dead" as well? These people were already alive to whom Paul preached (**THINK!**) Paul was referring to their spiritual awakening (being now alive spiritually to their true nature [that they are vessels for God living in and thorough them in the physical realm] yet **dead** before in trespasses and sins prior to receiving this spirit initiation). Once they were **baptized** and immersed and initiated into Gnosis and the knowledge that within in dwells the Christ of God then they were no longer expected to live in submission to their lower self but unto their higher self (pneumatics). For Christians Gnostics this was their **"Spiritual resurrection". We just saw in this "death, baptism, and spiritual resurrection" the Exodus allegory replayed through New Testament eyes where "the Christ" had accomplished for these believers the same benefit as Moses had done for Israel in the Old Testament.** Arriving at this understanding only reinforced the idea that since they are all a part of God's Divine Consciousness within living flesh and matter then how dare they live unrighteously in light of the new knowledge of their true identity (that the Divine Spark of God lived within them).

Later Christian Literalists and proto-Catholics like Justin and Irenaeus rejected this Inner Mystery of Gnostic Christianity. They promoted the Outer Mysteries or the literal interpretation of the **Joshua-Jesus allegory**. They taught that an historical person called Jesus literally died and resurrected for us, and that if we believe this we will go to Heaven when we die, while if we disbelieve we will be condemned to torment in Hell. **This has nothing to do with the understanding of the original Christians, however. They taught that we each need to resurrect for ourselves, because we are all dead and in Hell right now (in a symbolic sense).**

As usual, the Gnostics turn our "common sense" view inside-out. The underworld - Hades or Hell - is usually taken to be the place souls go after death. But for the Gnostics, the world we presently inhabit is the underworld, where we exist as the spiritually dead. As Hans Jonas notes, "In Gnostic thought the world takes the place of the traditional underworld and is itself already the realm of the dead " (H. Jonas, Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God, 1958, p. 68.).

Again, the Gnostics were taking up a theme that had already been fully elaborated in Pagan mythology and philosophy (W. Burkert, Lord and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism, 1972, p. 134, note 80: "Empedocles has no underworld, for him earthly existence is Hades." Plato writes: "I should not be surprised, you know, if Euripides was right when he said, 'Who knows, if life be death, and death be life'" [Euripides, *Polyidus*, fr. 7.] And perhaps we are actually dead, for I once heard one of our wise men say that we are now dead, and that our body is a tomb" (Plato, *Gorgias*, 493a). Plato writes: "I have heard from the wise that we are now dead and the body is our tomb" (Plato, *Cratylus*, 400c, confirms that the "wise men" referred to in *Gorgias*, 493, are in fact Orphics). The Pagan Gnostic Olympiodorus teaches: "When separated from the body the psyche lives in reality, for here she dies" (Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the Gorgias*, quoted in Porphyry, On the Cave of the Nymphs, p. 69). **Again this is to be understood only allegorically.**



**With characteristic irony, the Gnostics also describe the state of being identified with the physical body, which we normally think of as being awake, as falling asleep.** Our "normal" state is not being alive and awake - it is being asleep and dreaming we are in Hell. Plotinus explains that to incarnate (be born) "is to descend into Hades and there fall asleep" (Plotinus, *Enn.*, 1.8, quoted in T. Taylor, *Oracles and Mysteries*, 1995, p 60). The theme that this world was the Underworld was widely held, but rarely explicitly stated, by philosophers and poets in the ancient world. Taylor supplies passages from Empedocles, Heracitus, Plato, Philolaus and Clement of Alexandria that testify to the importance of this theme in the Pagan Mysteries. The Christian *Secret Book of John* urges, "Be wakeful so that you come out of heavy sleep and take off the clothes of Hades." "I am the Pronoia of the pure light; I am the thinking of the virginal Spirit, who raised you up to the honoured place. Arise and remember that it is you who hearkened, and follow your root, which is I, the merciful one, and guard yourself against the angels of poverty and the demons of chaos and all those who ensnare you, and beware of the deep sleep and the enclosure of the inside of Hades" (*The Apocryphon of John*, NRC, 2.1.31; in J.M. Robinson, 1978, p. 122; B. Layton, 1987, p. 141). The Christian text *The Concept of our Great Power* urges, "You are asleep and dreaming. Wake up" ("Yet you are sleeping, dreaming dreams. Wake up and return" (*The Concept of our Great Power*, NRC, 6.4.40, in Robinson, op. cit., p. 314).

We think we are alive, but really we are dead. We think we are awake, but really we are asleep and dreaming. We think we know who we are and what life is, but really we are lost in illusion. **We need to resurrect. We need to wake up. We need Gnosis and knowledge concerning our true self...that we are one with Christ living in and through our earthly existence.** Quoting a pre-existing hymn, Paul writes:

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

*Ephesians* has preserved what Rudolph calls the "gnostic call" (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, p. 120).

We are all the dead Christ and need to resurrect to our true identity. This is the essence of Christianity. **The purpose of Christian initiation is to awaken within us an awareness of our essential nature as the Christ. Then we will be a "Christian" - a conscious member of the "body of Christ".**

*2 Cor 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* (KJV)

Paul writes:

"We are only on the *pneumatic* level **if** God's Consciousness dwells in us. **Those who don't possess the Christ Consciousness are not Christians.**"

*Rom 8:8-9 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* (KJV)

**Answer for yourself:** Does this mean that some do not have "the Christ"? No. But many are not aware of their spiritual nature and need to be alerted and awakened to that fact.

If we awaken to Christ Consciousness, we will know Heaven to be an ever-present reality. Heaven is the centre of self, where we permanently exist as the Christ. Hell is where we mistake ourselves to be separate egos and so temporally exist as the spiritually dead. **Heaven and Hell are both here and now, depending on whether we are spiritually dead or resurrected.** In *The Gospel of Thomas* Jesus teaches: "*The kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the Earth and people don't see it.*" (Thomas 113). Now lets read the passage again but with a deeper "Gnosis":

But Paul explains:

*2 Cor 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (KJV)*

## SUMMARY

Christianity is about the quest for self-knowledge. Human identity has three aspects: spirit, soul, body - Consciousness, psyche, physicality. Essentially, we are Consciousness witnessing psyche. The body exists within the psyche as sensation. Self-knowledge and knowledge of God are the same thing, because our shared essential identity is God. We are the one Consciousness of God believing itself to be many separate persons. From this we understand Paul's idea of "the body of Christ"...many awakened parts making up the whole!

The path of self-knowledge is a step-wise process of initiation, through which we learn to disengage from the "flesh" and discover our immortal nature as the Consciousness of God that lives within us as fleshly bodies.

The *psychic* or soul initiation is about perfecting the person we appear to be. The *pneumatic* or spirit initiation is about being the impersonal Consciousness we are. The realization of Gnosis is the fulfillment of the previous two stages of initiation and the culmination of the path of self-knowledge, in which we realize everything and everyone to be an expression of the Mystery of God in one fashion or another.

The earliest Christians understood that nothing exists outside of God. God is in everything and everything is a manifestation of God in one way or another. Similarly, everything that exists constitutes a "unity" and this all-inclusive unity is in some sense divine. Every existing entity is, only one Being; and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it. In like manner the figure of Christ represents the one Consciousness of God which is our essential shared identity. The Christian message is that we are spiritually dead and need to resurrect to our true identity, which is Christ - the Consciousness of God that lives within us all (fleshly bodies) & the live our lives accordingly honoring the Christ within.





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# THE EVOLUTION OF THE JESUS MYTH

The Jesus story as we now know it was not created all at once, or by only one person. The "Jesus story" developed gradually, as different Gnostics added new motifs and refined old ones, fashioning a progressively more complex allegory as time went on. Later, as referenced repeatedly during prior articles, the Jesus story fell into the hands of those with a more political agenda and became distorted and confused, but the underlying initiation allegory which is its foundation remains:

- [Awakening To "The Christ" Within You](#)
- [Gnosticism And The Self-Knowledge Of The God-Spirit Within You](#)
- [The Essence Of Gnostic Christianity](#)

The problem is that we don't see this "initiation allegory" any longer since Rome added much to the First New Testament to obscure the "allegorical" interpretation of "the Christ." With the later "literalization" of "the Christ" by Rome in their Second New Testament this earliest understanding of "the Christ" by the Gnostic Jewish and Gentile Christians has almost been lost today. Only since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library and the Coptic Gospels has this light again reached mankind. Rome's censorship and destruction of the Gnostics and their writings has succeeded over the centuries to such an effect that few, if any, know the truth about the earliest of Christians and followers of "the Christ."

The earliest Christian texts we possess are the genuine letters of Paul written in the first half of the first century. Paul quotes older hymns to Christ, which suggests that he is developing a Joshua/Jesus cult that may have already been in existence, perhaps for centuries. We have shown in earlier articles that this Godman myth has existed since Egypt and only the names of the entities have changed in successive centuries.

Unlike the New Testament gospels, written some 50-100 years later after the authentic Pauline writings, Paul does not teach a quasi-historical narrative about Jesus. Paul's Jesus is a clearly mythical figure who does not inhabit any particular time or place. Paul never quotes Jesus and does not portray him as a recently deceased Jewish master. Paul alludes to (but does not quote) several sayings that are later attributed to Jesus in the gospels. Stanton observes: *"Paul fails to refer to a saying of Jesus at the very point where he might well have clinched his argument by doing so"* (G. Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 1995, p. 130).

## WAS PAUL'S CHRIST JESUS A REAL PERSON?

Truly, he doesn't treat him as someone who had actually lived at all. Paul's epistles, written c.50 CE, are the earliest Christian texts we possess and the earliest depiction of "the Christ" that we have from Christian hands.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this important? First of all this gives us the earliest and truest picture of what "the Christ" was believed to be as well as being a strong influence upon later Gospel writers as they mould a

biography around "the Christ."

Paul tells us very little that could relate to an historical Jesus, apart from that fact that he was born of a woman, baptized, died and resurrected - all of which Pagans could equally claim of Osiris-Dionysius, without intending to imply that he had been an historical figure. Paul:

- Makes no mention of the cleansing of the Temple (which according to *Mark* and *Luke* was responsible for the decision of the chief priests and scribes to kill Jesus),
- There is no mention of the virgin birth,
- There is no infancy narratives,
- There is no childhood stories of baby Jesus,
- There are no later accounts of conflict with the authorities,
- There is no agony in Gethsemane,
- There is not one reference to the trails of Jesus
- There are no mention of the thieves crucified with Jesus,
- There are no weeping women,
- There is no word about the place or the time and no mention of Judas or Pilate,
- There is no mention of Mary or Joseph,
- There is no reference to the Sermon on the Mount or
- There is not one mention of any miracle performed by Jesus, etc.

**Answer for yourself: Why?**

G. A. Wells quotes the words of several New Testament scholars who refer to the "scantiness of Paul's Jesus tradition" as "surprising", "shocking" and a "matter of serious concern". Stanton remarks that *"Paul's failure to refer more frequently and at greater length to the actions and teaching of Jesus is baffling"* (op. cit., 131). As Wells also notes, Paul's complete silence on the historical Jesus *"remains a problem only for those who insist that there was a historical Jesus to be silent about"* (*Did Jesus Exist?*, p. 21). In fact, Paul tells us quite specifically that he never met an historical Jesus but a being of light whom appeared to him in a vision. In his *Letter to the Colossians* Paul describes himself as having been assigned by God the task of delivering his message "in full"; of announcing "the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations" which is now being disclosed to those chosen by God.

**Answer for yourself:** And what is this great secret? Is it, as we might expect from an orthodox apostle, the "good news" that Jesus had literally come and walked the Earth, worked miracles, died for our sins and returned from the dead? No. No. As much as I read the authentic Pauline epistles (seven) I cannot find such references to a historical Jesus.

Paul writes: "The secret is this: Christ in you."

*Col 1:25-28 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever noticed this before when reading the Book of Hebrews?

*Heb 8:4 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: (KJV)*



**Answer for yourself:** What? "IF" he had been on earth?

*You mean he wasn't?*

Paul or a pro-Pauline writer writes: "If" Jesus had been on Earth, he wouldn't have been a priest," not, "When Jesus was on Earth, he wasn't a priest."

When Paul reveals to us "the secret" of Christianity, it has absolutely nothing to do with an historical Jesus. The secret he declares is the mystical revelation of "Christ in you" - the one Consciousness of God in all of us (the indwelling Logos...Chokmah...Sophia...Son of God...Holy Spirit...etc.).

*Col 1:25-28 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

Paul's Jesus is a mythic figure whose story teaches initiates the path they must follow to realize the Christ within. The only narrative elements of the Jesus myth important to Paul are:

- Christ's baptism,
- Christ's death and
- Christ's resurrection

**Answer for yourself:** What do all of these three things above have in common? They are a "pattern" for initiation into Gnostic Christianity as taken from the Exodus allegory of Moses and Joshua which was used by Gnostic Christians to lead new converts to God.

All of these Paul understands "allegorically" and not "literally" as symbolizing the stages of initiation into the "Higher Mysteries" of Christianity (Gnostic Christianity). By identifying with Jesus' baptism initiates are washed clean of their past and begin the quest for Gnosis. By vicariously sharing in Jesus' death and resurrection, they symbolically die to their "old self" and resurrect "in Christ".

*Rom 6:4 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (KJV)*

*Eph 4:22 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (KJV)*

*Col 3:9 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; (KJV)*

In the writings of Paul, then, we find the basic Jesus myth as a three-stage initiation allegory, adapted from the three-stage initiation structure of the Exodus Moses-Jesus myth:

- baptism (crossing Red Sea),
- the death of Jesus (death of Moses),
- resurrection (Jesus arrives in the Promised Land).

Later Christians will expand this simple allegorical foundation to create the complete Jesus story.

Christian gospels began to be written down at around the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century. These include *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, *The Dialogue of the Saviour*, *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *The Exegesis of the Soul*, *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, *The Apocryphon of John*, *The Secret Gospel of Mark* and *Pistis Sophia*.

**Answer for yourself:** What do all of these early gospels have in common? They are all now rejected as heretical by the Roman Church and they did not teach a "historical Jesus" but rather an "allegorical" understanding of the Exodus allegory and "the Christ - Sophia".

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FOUR GOSPELS

One thing is surely indisputable from all of this: the gospels are not, as some Christians claim, the divine words of God. The view of the Bible as the Word of God or Holy Scripture belongs to a past time. Today it hinders understanding. The Bible is the word of human beings. There is today a crisis in New Testament studies for the facts from serious study is the death blow for such traditions. For if the words of the New Testament are God's Word, then God is extremely confused. As, by his very nature, God is unlikely to be confused, it seems safe to conclude that we are dealing with the words of fallible men.

**Answer for yourself:** So, can the gospels be relied on to tell us anything about a historical Jesus? What light can scholarship shed on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

Well, first of all, the gospels were not originally even known by these names. They were not attributed to any particular author, each gospel being regarded as "the gospel" of a particular Christian sect. Only later did they acquire the names of their supposed authors (I. Wilson, *Jesus: The Evidence*, 1984, p. 32). **The gospels are actually anonymous works**, in which everything, without exception, is written in capital letters, with no headings, chapter or verse divisions, and practically no punctuation or spaces between words. They were not even written in the Aramaic of the Jews but in Greek.

**The gospels have also been added to and altered over time. The Pagan critic Celsus complains that Christians "altered the original text of the gospels three or four times, or even more, with the intention of thus being able to destroy the arguments of their critics"** (G. Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 1995, p. 35). Modern scholars have found that he was right. A careful study of over 3,000 early manuscripts has shown how scribes made many changes (Ibid.). The Christian philosopher Origen, writing in the third century, acknowledges that manuscripts have been edited and interpolated to suit the needs of the changing theological climate:

*It is an obvious fact today that there is much diversity among the manuscripts, due either to the carelessness of the scribes, or the perverse audacity of some people in correcting the text, or again to the fact that there are those who add or delete as they please, setting themselves up as correctors.*  
(quoted Ibid.).

To convey the enormity of the problem, one scholar describes selecting a place in the gospels completely at random (in this case he chose Mark 10-11) and checking to see how many differences were recorded between various early manuscripts for these passages. He discovered "no fewer than 48 places where the manuscripts differ, sometimes there are only two possibilities, often there are three or more, and in one case there are six!" (Ibid.).

**Scholars also know that whole sections of the gospels were added later.** For example, originally Mark did not contain any words beyond Chapter 16 verse 8 - the fear of the women at their discovery of the empty tomb. The so-called "long ending," in which the risen Jesus appears to his disciples, is not found in any early manuscripts and yet now appears in nearly all New Testaments.



Despite all of this editing and amending, **the gospels remain contradictory and inconsistent**, as we have seen. For centuries, the Catholic Church prevented anyone other than priests reading the New Testament for themselves so few had the chance to discover just how confused the gospels are. That all changed with the Protestant Reformation Luther demanded that ordinary people be allowed to read the Bible for themselves, a challenge to the Vatican that helped spark the Reformation.

Eager to distance themselves from Rome, German Protestant scholars began to search the gospels for the real Jesus. Even up to the present day the majority of such scholars have themselves been Christians, since a theological career at a German university is closed to those who have not been baptized. Yet despite this, rather than giving Christianity a firm historical foundation, as they hoped, Protestant scholars' three centuries of intense scholarship have undermined the literal figure of Jesus completely. I Wilson in his book *Jesus: The Evidence*, on page 33 states that Protestant scholarly endeavors required great courage, for they were confronting a deeply entrenched belief in the accuracy, indeed the divinity, of the gospels. In the 18th century, Herman Reimar, Professor of Oriental Languages at Hamburg University, was dismissed from his post when he repudiated the miracle stories as spurious and supernatural. It is of note that the term "gospel truth" dates back only to the 19th century, when these doubts about the gospels became widely known (G. Stanton, op. cit., p. 7).

From detailed research they concluded that the Gospel of John was written so late that it could not have been an eyewitness account (G. Stanton, op. cit., p. 37). In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus teaches in pithy parables, but John contains lengthy, apparently verbatim speeches in fluent Greek, which were clearly not the words of a Jewish carpenter's son. Irenaeus, who gave us the Second New Testament, maintains that the author of the Gospel of John is Jesus' favorite disciple John. It is unlikely though that this simple fisherman from Galilee was trained in either philosophy or Greek, unlike the writer of John's Gospel. J Campbell in his *Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, 1955, on page 170, notes that scholars are agreed that the Gospel of John and the first epistle are probably by the same author, but that this is not the disciple John. The second epistle is by another author and the third by still another. The Book of Revelation, also said to be by John, is a Christian recension of a late Jewish apocalypse written under a pseudonym. John also describes quite different incidents from the other gospels.

The work of the Berlin philologist Karl Lachmann and other eminent scholars also revealed that, despite their differences, Matthew, Mark, and Luke shared a great deal in common. These similarities are due to the fact that Matthew and Luke are actually reworkings of Mark (Wilson, op. cit., p. 36), which is the simplest and earliest gospel. If John is written too late and Matthew and Luke are based on Mark, this leaves us only the Gospel of Mark as a possible eyewitness account of the life of Jesus.

Scholars believe that Mark was written sometime between 70 CE and the early second century. G. Wells in his *Did Jesus Exit?* says that it is impossible to be more precise than this. For sightings of what will become the first Gospel we are dependent on the testimony of early Apostolic fathers, men like Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius. As well as being used disingenuously by second-century writers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian, their letters were also interpolated and added to in the fourth and fifth centuries. Picking through this mess leaves us with the generally held view that sometime between 70-135 C.E. might be correct. If we accept the earliest possible date, it is just feasible that Mark was an eyewitness. **Yet ironically, Mark does not claim to have known Jesus**. Many in the early Church objected to his gospel being treated as canonical for this very reason. Stanton tells us that in the second century doubts were expressed about Mark, Luke, and John - Mark because he was simply a secretary of Peter, Luke because he was said to have been an assistant to Paul (who had himself not seen Jesus), and John because that gospel was widely known to be the work of the Gnostic Cerinthus. Only Matthew was above suspicion. Our Matthew, however, is not the one that was known to Papias of Hierapolis, who is said to have been active post 70 C.E. in Asia Minor. He collected information about the Messiah from refugees pouring out of Asia Minor, but refers to his Matthew as a book of "oracles". This suggests a book of proof texts on the Old Testament, used as prophecies or "oracles" to support the Jesus story. Papias was also defensive of criticism against Mark because he was not an eyewitness of the events he recounts. Mark is claimed to have been at best some sort of secretary or interpreter for Peter. Even this is impossible, however, since Mark's gospel exhibits what one modern scholar calls "a lamentable ignorance of Palestinian geography"



(Wilson, op. cit., p. 36).

In the seventh chapter, for instance, Jesus is reported as going through Sidon on his way from Tyre to the Sea of Galilee. Not only is Sidon in the opposite direction, but there was in fact no road from Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the first century CE, only one from Tyre.

Similarly the fifth chapter refers to the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore as the country of the Gerasenes, yet Gerasa, today Jerash, is more than thirty miles to the southeast, too far away for a story whose setting requires a nearby city with a steep slope down to the sea. Aside from geography, Mark represented Jesus as saying, "If a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery" (Mark 10:12), a precept which would have been meaningless in the Jewish world, where women had no rights of divorce (Ibid.).

In the late nineteenth century, Wilhelm Wrede, Professor of New Testament Studies at Breslau University, argued that even the Gospel of Mark, the earliest and most primitive gospel, was more concerned with theological dogma than historical accuracy (Ibid., p. 33). In 1919 another German scholar, Karl Ludwig I Schmidt, published a careful study of the way in which Mark's gospel had been created. He was able to show that the author of Mark had created his gospel by linking together existing smaller stories. The Jesus story had been constructed from pre-existing fragments (Ibid.). An example of this is the miraculous feeding, which appears twice in Mark, once to 4,000 and once to 5,000. It seems unlikely that these were two separate incidents, particularly since in the second the disciples ask, "Where could anyone get bread to feed these people in a deserted place like this?", thus being apparently ignorant of the first occasion, which they are reported to have witnessed. The way that Matthew and Luke had added to Mark the nativity story and genealogies showed how the Jesus story had evolved over time. It could no longer be assumed by scholars that these narratives were in any way factual accounts (B. L. Mack, The Lost Gospel, 1993, p. 24. This effectively brought to an end any hope of finding a historical Jesus within the gospels.

German theologians began increasingly to date the origination of Mark, Matthew, and Luke to well into the second century CE (I. Wilson, op. cit., 1984, p. 37; G. A. Wells, op. cit., 1975, p. 72). Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), Professor of New Testament Studies at Marburg University, spent his life studying the gospels and was one of the greatest authorities on the New Testament. He pioneered the influential method of analyzing the gospels called "form-criticism." Eventually he concluded:

*I do indeed think that we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either and are, moreover, fragmentary and often legendary.*

It is currently accepted amongst most scholars that also written at this time were the anonymous gospels that were later attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which turn Paul's timeless Christ myth into a pseudo-historical drama. These are represented by the Four Gospels in our current New Testament today!

The evidence for dating these gospels so early, however, is very flimsy as we have demonstrated. Once we have jettisoned the untenable idea of these texts being eye-witness reports, it seems likely that future scholarship will date them later and later into the second century - and even then with no certainty as to just how similar the gospels of that time were to the versions with which we are familiar today. Despite the widespread assertion that the gospels originated c. 70 CE-110 C.E., the only "evidence" to back this up are some vague allusions in Papias and Polycarp, whose testimony has in turn been through the "Holy Forgery Mill" of Irenaeus and Eusebius. The evidence supports the belief that the texts we now call the gospels are in fact late second-century creations. It is profoundly suspicious that Justin Martyr, writing in the middle of the second century in Rome, never mentions Matthew, Mark, Luke or John in his entire extant works and yet just a generation later in the same part of the world Irenaeus states that there are only four gospels and the canon is closed. Celsus, writing c. 170 CE, knows nothing about Matthew, Mark, Luke or John but refers to gospels of Helen, Mariamme, Salome and a host of other



women, and the texts known to Plotinus in Rome at the beginning of the third century are Gnostic works, copies of which have now been found in Nag Hammadi.

Nor does "hard" archaeological evidence support a first-century date for the gospels. In 1992 Carsten Thiede's The Earliest Gospel Manuscript claimed that the three fragments stored for a long time in Magdalene College, Oxford, date from the middle of the first century. However, the eminent papyrologist Graham Stanton has clearly demonstrated that the fragments are written in the "Biblical Uncial" handwriting which only emerged in the late second century (Stanton, op. cit., 13). In addition, these tiny fragments can tell us nothing about the texts they came from and for whole texts we must wait until the fourth century - a suspicious fact in itself.

The Gospel of Mark is thought to be the earliest of the New Testament gospels, but scholars have shown it to have been created from pre-existing fragments which contain sayings and a non-time/place specific Jesus story to which someone has added a geographical and historical context.

According to Clement of Alexandria, there were originally three gospels attributed to Mark - the one in the New Testament, a second *Secret Gospel of Mark*, of which we have fragments, and a third oral gospel too profound to be written down, but passed on from master to master (*The Secret Gospel of Mark*) in W. Barnstone, The Other Bible, 1984, p. 341). Professor Wilhelm Wrede (1859-1906) of Breslau University was the first to show that the supposedly "primitive" Gospel of Mark had undergone extensive theological rewriting and editing. In 1919 Karl Ludwig Schmidt demonstrated that the gospel had been composed from previously existing fragments and that the connecting links between these were Mark's own invention.

Matthew and Luke based their versions of the Jesus myth on Mark, copying sections of it right down to the same Greek particles while The Gospel of John presents a significantly different version of the myth. G.A. Wells, G. A. (op. cit., p. 95) states that the realization that Matthew and Luke copied Mark led to the discovery that they both also used another text which scholars have identified as Q. S. L. Davies, in his The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom, 1983, demonstrates that both Q and *Thomas* are related works which depend heavily on Wisdom sayings. All of the New Testament gospels contradict each other in many important details (G. Stanton, Gospel Truth?; Freke and Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, p. 139ff). This is because the Gnostics saw their scriptures as initiation allegories and so had no compunction about adapting them to suit their own particular requirements.

## THE FOUR GOSPELS....PSEUDO HISTORICAL NARRATIVES?

Not forgetting what we just read above which is the hard facts we find upon serious in-depth study, now as well that the Pagans had for centuries expressed their myths in the form of plays. The Jews had no dramatic tradition, but did write the first Greek historical novel - an allegorical story which portrays Judaism as a Mystery religion (*Joseph and Aseneth*, the story of the conversion of an Egyptian girl to Judaism written in the second or first century BCE, is considered by Momigliano to be the oldest Greek novel in existence). It should not surprise us, therefore, that some 200 years later the Jesus allegory, the central myth of the Christian Mystery cult, was likewise written in the form of a quasi-historical novel. The "Cruci-Fiction" in R. M. Price and his Deconstructing Jesus, 2000, p. 213ff, draws attention to the affinity of the gospel story to the genre of the ancient romance novel. Favorite themes common to both include lovers separated by tragic events (cf the Gnostic myth of Sophia and Jesus, their tragic separation and ultimate reunion), empty tombs and heroes surviving crucifixion. Bickerman writes about Hellenistic Jewish literature and its passion for "modernizing" biblical stories: 'Because pure fiction did not exist at this date, in order to express new ideas an author had to remodel an existing factual narrative.' (J. Bickerman, The Jews in the Greek Age, 1988), 206).

Historical myths were the Jews' speciality. The Exodus initiation allegory, which also appears to have no basis in actual history, is written in the form of a pseudo-historical narrative. Despite the best efforts of biblical

archaeologists to prove that the Exodus took place during the reign of Rameses (Genesis 47:11), there is no evidence that this has any basis in historical fact (at least not at that time but does so when it is redated to a different time). The link between Rameses II and the Israelite bondage was an illusion without any real archaeological foundation. When Jewish Gnostics developed their new myth of Jesus the Jewish dying and resurrecting Godman, it was inevitable they would eventually also set this allegory in an historical context. As with the *Exodus* myth, the creators of the Jesus story mixed together mythical figures, such as Jesus and Mary, with a handful of historical figures which were also used to play symbolic roles in the initiation allegory. Unlike *Exodus*, the new Jesus myth could not be set in archaic times, because it was portrayed as a revelation of a new Messiah. It was set, therefore, in the recent past and incorporated figures who were important to Jewish Gnostics, such as the much revered John the Baptist and the much hated Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler of Judaea.

At the end of the first century CE, when the original Christians were casting the Jesus myth in an historical setting, Israel was in deep crisis. Jews needed an explanation for the terrible events which were befalling them. In 70 CE the Jerusalem Temple, the very heart of Jewish Literalism, had been torn down by the Romans. By 135 CE the whole of Israel would be laid waste and cease to exist for 2,000 years. Jewish Gnostics deliberately set the Jesus story in the years in which the crisis began.

It was precisely at the time that Jesus was portrayed as being born that Rome imposed direct taxation on Judaea, forever ending its independence, and Pilate signalled the irrelevance of Jewish culture by desecrating the Temple in Jerusalem". Luke tells us that Jesus was born at the time of the census of Quirinius, which scholars date to 6 CE. Unfortunately for the supposed inerrancy of the gospels, Matthew 2:1 tells us that Jesus' birth was during the reign of King Herod, who died 10 years earlier in 4 BCE. According to Josephus and Philo, Pilate was particularly detested by the Jews Pilate was prefect for 10 years from 26 until 36, when he was sent back to Rome to answer for a massacre. He was so hated that he is the only prefect from the years 6 to 41 to be mentioned by name by Josephus and Philo. He violated Jewish religious taboos many times and was the first Roman to defile the Jerusalem Temple. Josephus writes, "Pilate, during the night, secretly and undercover, conveyed to Jerusalem the images of Caesar known as *sigma*. When day dawned this caused great excitement among the Jews: for those who were near were amazed at the sight, which meant that their laws had been trampled on - they do not permit any graven image to be set up in the city" (Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 1959, p. 126). It was a defining moment in Jewish history, which reached its terrible crescendo in the holocaust of 70 CE. In Israel and the Diaspora, the first century felt like the "end days", as indeed it was for the Jews as a sovereign nation. The original Christians therefore really had no choice about when they set their Jesus myth. If the Messiah didn't come at this time, when he was most needed, he just couldn't be the Messiah.

The original Christians (Gnostic Essenes-Therapeutae) portrayed their Gnostic hero Jesus-Joshua as a harbinger of these turbulent times who came to offer mystical liberation as an alternative to the futile attempts at political liberation which, in retrospect, the Jews could see had destroyed them completely. The Gnostic Messiah Jesus offered defeated and dejected Jews meaning and new hope.





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# CHRISTIANITY'S LOST GODDESS...THE SOPHIA

*27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.*

The above verse as taken from the Tanakh as been recited by countless millions of people but few have ever taken a second to contemplate the "feminine" aspect of God. This is a tragic loss for us today but this has not always been the case. It might surprise you but the earliest Gnostic Christians stressed this feminine aspect of God and would so until being eradicated by the "patriarchial" Church of Rome in the 5th century. After this purge of truth by Rome this understanding of God would go underground and we find it surviving down through history in such groups as the Cathars and Nights Templars.

When one looks at the Kabbalah one encounters the ten Sefirot; often called the ten emanations of the Godhead. This concerns the exposing of the revelation of the hidden God. The rabbis teach us that these ten Sefirot, comprising God, are different spiritual categories that representing male and female aspects of God (Ein Sof). For instance, directly below the first sefirah of Keter, we have Chokmah/wisdom, representing the **male aspect**, and then Binah/understanding, also called **"the supernal mother," "womb,"** giving birth to the lower Sefirot by virtue of its own "fertilization" from Chokmah. Directly below them are the Sefirot of Chesed/love and Din/judgment, which requires some softening by what is regarded as the more "female" side of Chesed. Directly below them is Tiferet/beauty, where these seeming **opposite qualities are harmonized** (and thus, perhaps, the very "beauty" of this sefirah). The next to last sefirah is Yesod/foundation, often regarded as the phallus which plants the seed for the final sefirah of Malkhut/kingship, sometimes referred to as Shekhinah, a feminine word for the Divine Presence. **In general, only when these forces are in balance does creation function properly. So within God there exists both the duality of "masculine" and "feminine."**

We have seen previously in several articles on this website the existence of and the formation of the myth of the Godman Joshua-Jesus. **What we have not learned before now is that the myth of the Godman Joshua-Jesus can only be properly understood alongside the myth of the Goddess Sophia.** After so many centuries of patriarchal Christianity it is both shocking and reassuring to discover a Goddess at the very heart of Christianity. She is, like her son/brother/lover Jesus, a syncretic figure created from both Pagan and Jewish sources.

## SOPHIA...THE PERSONIFICATION OF GOD'S WISDOM...GOOD OR BAD?

Well that depends on whom you ask and whom is writing the documents we accept as authoritative today. I will tell you this however before we proceed the answer to the above question will depend upon whether we interpret these "feminine" aspects of God "allegorically" or "literally". But we have see this already when studying the Godman Joshua-Jesus.

**Sophia, whose name means "wisdom", had been the Goddess of the Pagan philosophers for**

**centuries. Sophia's name comes from the Greek word for "wisdom," the personification of the Female Divine.** Indeed, the word **"philosopher", first used by Pythagoras, means "lover of Sophia".** Although often pictured today as dry academics, these brilliant intellectuals were actually mystics and devotees of the Goddess. Parmenides, for example, is usually remembered as the founder of Western logic, yet his masterwork is a visionary poem in which he descends to the underworld to be instructed by the Goddess. As Kingsley notes, "Every single figure Parmenides encounters in his poem is female, and he is taught by a goddess. The universe he describes is a feminine one and if this man's poem represents the starting point for Western logic, then something very strange has happened for logic to end up the way it has" (P. Kingsley, In The Dark Places Of Wisdom, 1999, p. 56.) In *Timaeus*, Solon the Egyptian priest tells Socrates that "the Goddess" was the founder of both Greek and Egyptian civilizations and expresses his "gratitude to the Goddess to whom it has fallen to bring up and educate both your country and ours" (Plato, *Timaeus*, 23)

Sophia was also an important mythical figure for Jewish Gnostics, such as Philo. **Philo calls Sophia "the Way" and the royal road which leads to God** (*Deus Imm.*, 142-4, *Somn.* 1.66; *Quaest in Genesis* 2.12); 4.46). Although later rejected by Jewish Literalists, there had always been a Jewish Goddess tradition. It is often assumed that the Hebrews were fiercely opposed to Goddess worship, but archaeologists have unearthed many inscriptions dedicated "To Jehovah and his Asherah" (K. Armstrong, A History Of God, 1993, p. 58-9). Manasseh and Amon, early kings of Israel, worshipped an effigy of Asherah in the Temple (*ibid.*, 64). *Ezekiel* 8.14 makes clear that the cult of Tammuz and Innana was celebrated in Jerusalem itself (P. Jaroslav, The Tanakh, 1985, p. 902). The Old Testament is full of references to Israel defecting to the cults of her neighbours, for example *Numbers* 25.3.5 (in which the Lord tells Moses to have the ringleaders of the cult publicly crucified), *Deuteronomy* 23.18, *I Kings* 15.12, *Psalms* 28, 105, 106, *Jeremiah* 16.5, *Hosiah* 4.14, *Amos* 7.9 and *Wisdom* 12.3, 14.5).

**At one time Israelites had worshipped the Goddess Asherah as the consort of the Jewish God Jehovah.** A vestige of the cult of Ishtar and Marduk survives in the Old Testament Book of *Esther* as the story of Esther and Mordecai (*Esther* 8:2). In the fifth century BCE she was known as Anat Jahu. Jews stationed at Elephantine in Egypt in the fifth century BCE worshipped Jehovah and his goddess Anat Jahu (S.A. Hoeller, Jung and the Lost Gospels: Insights into the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library, 1989, p. 66).

**Answer for yourself:** But we we not led to believe that this worship of these "feminine" aspects of God were evil by the Old Testament? Well yes but not all of the Old Testament teaches this; in fact some of the Old Testament teaches just the opposite! **In texts written between the fourth and first centuries BCE, such as *Proverbs*, *The Sophia of Solomon* and *The Sophia of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, she becomes God's companion and co-creator Sophia."**

The Wisdom texts of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha include:

- **Proverbs,**
- **The Song of Songs,**
- **The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach,**
- **Ecclesiastes,**
- **Baruch and**
- **The Wisdom of Solomon.**

Due to the number of references in the New Testament and Gnostic gospels, the Jewish Wisdom tradition was clearly of major importance to early Christianity. **Wisdom (feminine in both Hebrew and Greek) is represented as present with God at the creation (*Proverbs* 8:22-31), but according to Baruch she is also said to have appeared on Earth and lived among men (*Baruch* 3:37).**

**Answer for yourself:** Let us ponder; should this be understood "allegorically" or "literally"? Allegorically of course! As the Sefirot is but one way to explain the unexplainable God so likewise are other allegorical concepts



such as the "logos" and "the Christ."

She is the guide of Israel (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 7:22-30) and, more significantly given the Gnostic exegesis of this key text, she is said to have led the Israelites during the Exodus (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 10).

*1 Cor 10:4 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** We saw previously that "the Christ" is to be understood "allegorically" in the New Testament and not "literally." Should we be surprised that Paul mentions also the "allegorical" concept of "the Christ" as following Israel as the nation wandered during the Exodus in light of just now coming to see how the Sophia (also understood "allegorically") also led Israel as well?

Sophia sits by the throne of God (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 9.4) which is an exact parallel to the Orphic Goddess Justice, who sits by the throne of Zeus. Wisdom is loved by God (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 8.3) and the whole history of salvation is under her control (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 7:10-19). **She is a redeemer who grants immortality (The Wisdom of Solomon 6:18, 8:17)** (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, 1987, p. 281ff; C. Matthews, *Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom*, 1992, 97ff). **As several scholars have noted, the Jewish figure of Wisdom manifests many of the attributes ascribed to Isis in the cults of Alexandria.** (Koppenborg, *Isis and the Book of Wisdom*, HTR 75, 1982, p. 57-84). **Resemblances to the Egyptian Goddess Maat have also been detailed;** (W. Scott, *Hermetica*, 1992, p. 67ff).

**Answer for yourself:** Are you noticing the link between Isis, Maat, Alexandria, Egypt, the home of the Essenes and Therapeutae as well as the link to the Sophia? Is there a link to Proverbs? Yes since Solomon is known by his Egyptian name Amenhotep III since Solomon was a Pharaoh as archeology teaches us today. As you are beginning to see this is not surprising given the Egyptian influence on *Proverbs*, the *locus classicus* of Jewish sapiential literature (J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 1955, p. 421-4).

The Jewish Sophia is the lover and inspiration of the good and the wise. She is "an initiate in the Mysteries of God's Gnosis" who teaches her followers to become "friends of God" - the universal name used by Pagan, Jewish and Christian Gnostics (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 8:4 and 7:14).

*The Sophia of Solomon assures us:*

*"Sophia shines brightly and never fades. She is readily discerned by those who love her, and by those who seek her she is found. She is quick to make herself known to all who desire her Gnosis (Ibid., 6:12-16).*

## THE SOPHIA AND "THE GOOD MAN" OF THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON TAKEN FROM THE APOCRYPHA

We have already seen the [Exodus allegory depicting the awaking of a believer to the self-knowledge or "gnosis" of "the Christ" within and how this was told through the allegory and metaphor of baptism, death, and resurrection.](#) We saw how this event in the life of an initiate (one instructed in this gnosis) was made to paralleled Israel's salvation from Egypt in the Old Testament and made to prefigure the Joshua-Jesus of the New Testament.

Now we need to see this same teaching again only slightly changed. The Sophia literature talks of a "Good Man" - no one in particular - who is the Goddess' envoy on Earth. **The opening chapters of *The Wisdom of Solomon* depict the fate of the "Just Man", Wisdom's ideal representative, whose suffering and death show his perfect obedience, which leads to his exaltation after death.** (G. A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist*, 1975, p. 38).

**Moses was pictured as such an envoy and we already have seen the parallels made to him with the Joshua-Jesus in the Exodus allegory used by the early Christian Gnostics.** According to the *Exodus* myth, when Moses passes on his authority to Jesus ben Nun, Joshua-Jesus also receives "the Spirit of Sophia" (*Deuteronomy* 34:9). **For the Christian Gnostics, their Joshua-Jesus is likewise Sophia's envoy, coming to reveal her wisdom which leads to Gnosis.** Hence "the secret" that Paul proclaims is "Christ in whom is hid the treasures of Sophia and Gnosis":

*Col 2:3 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 1:24 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom [SOPHIA] of God. (KJV)*

**Here we find the Gnostic Paul calling "the Christ" like "the power of God and the Sophia of God".** As George Wells notes, "The influence of Jewish Wisdom literature on Paul is undeniable ... statements about Wisdom in this literature are made of Jesus in the Pauline letters" Wells, G. A., *The Jesus Myth*, 1999, p. 97, and *Did Jesus Exist*, 1975, p. 38).

## **THE GOOD MAN IN THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON...A PROTOTYPE FOR JOSHUA-JESUS?**

In the Sophia literature the Good Man is persecuted by his own people for preaching Sophia's wisdom and condemned to a "shameful death". But he is vindicated afterwards and confronts his persecutors as their judge in Heaven, where he is one of the "Sons of God" (*The Wisdom of Solomon* 2:20; Wells, G. A., *The Jesus Myth*, 1999, p. 99).

In the hands of Christian Gnostics this Good Man is transformed into Jesus the "Son of God", who comes, according to the original Christians, "so that Sophia might be proclaimed" and is murdered by his misguided kinsmen, but is vindicated by his resurrection and ascension to Heaven, where he becomes the divine judge (Irenaeus, *AH*, 1.30.12; B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*, 1987, p. 179).

As well as basing their version of the Jesus myth on the *Gospel of Mark*, the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* drew on a now lost gospel, which scholars call Q. *The Gospel of Q* portrays both Jesus and John the Baptist as messengers sent by Sophia (G.A. Wells, *The Jesus Myth*, 1999, p.102). **It contains sayings attributed to Sophia, which in the gospels are put into the mouth of her envoy Jesus.** E. Doherty, *The Jesus Puzzle*, 1999, on pages 87-94 **teaches us that sayings attributed to personified Wisdom are ascribed by Paul to God's Son who "has absorbed both the Logos and personified Wisdom". What this means is that many of the wisdom sayings (of the personification of God's Wisdom that we find in "Q") are later put into the mouth of the Jesus of the New Testament.** Regarding *The Gospel of Thomas*, which shares nearly a third of its sayings with *The Gospel of Q*, Davies observes: ***"Jesus speaks as a wise man does, in the form of sayings of the wise, but he is not simply a wise man; he sometimes speaks as Wisdom herself. An intimate of God, agent in creation, Revealer of mysteries, the light within which the Image of God is hidden - all these are characteristics of Jesus as Wisdom in the Gospel of Thomas. In sum, the Christology (Jesusology) of the Gospel of Thomas is a naive but thoroughgoing Sophiology"*** (Christology and Sophiology" in S. L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, 1983).

Answer for yourself: What did we just say? We said that the "Christology" which is given Joshua-Jesus in the New Testament comes originally from the personification of God's Wisdom in the first place and should be likewise be understood "allegorically" in the New Testament instead of "literally" which we have been taught. Besides most of these sayings are not Jewish in character, but heavily influenced by the Cynic school of Pagan philosophy. In the bedrock layer of Q there is no sign of a historical Jesus at all and the material is of a



strikingly non-Jewish character. Many commentators consider it to be of Hellenistic Cynic origin (Doherty, op. cit., 162).

**Philo describes Sophia as the "mother of the Logos"** (Philo, *Fug.* 19). **Likewise in the Gnostic literature Wisdom is repeatedly called "Mother"**. In the *Untitled Text* 2.16 the Mother establishes her "First-born Son" (See also *Untitled Text* 2.12, *Teachings of Silvanus* 91,115). **Irenaeus tells us that the Mother was also called by the Gnostics:**

- **Ogdoad,**
  - The Ogdoad were the primeval forces of chaos in Egyptian mythology, represented as eight deities which existed before the creation of the sun god. The eight were considered as four couples, each embodying a different aspect of the primal world: Nun and Naunet, the god and goddess of the primordial waters; Kek and Keket, the deities of darkness; Amon and Amaunet representing invisible power; and Heh and Hehet representing infinity. Occasionally, other couples were included in the Ogdoad, but eight was always the total number of deities involved.
- **Sophia,**
- **Terra,**
  - Even before the rise of Inanna and the Sumerian civilization there was the Ubaid culture. Prevalent among them was a Snake Goddess. Her striking dark crown and human figure suggest both Her regal and authoritative nature, as well as Her link to humanity. This Neolithic Samarran/Ubaidian Goddess continues directly into Sumerian culture. The Egyptians saw goddesses in a fluid state. The attributes of one could easily be shared or assumed by another. The dominant goddess of Her day is termed the Great She. Before the physical destruction of Her temples, Isis was the Great She of Her day. Likewise, Lady Ishtar was the Great She of Her day before this. So the Great She of the modern day is Lucifer-Helel, Sophia-Chokmah, or Asherah-Gaia.
- **Jerusalem,**
- **Holy Spirit,**
  - Many theologians and scholars also realize that the Holy Spirit written as, Pneuma in Greek every time it appears in the New Testament, is a feminine being. Note that Pneuma is a feminine word in Greek. This would make Pneuma, the Holy Spirit, a Christian Goddess, not a mysteriously veiled member of an all-male Trinity "club." Also, the Holy Spirit appears at Yeshua's baptism in the form of a dove. The dove has long been a symbol of the Goddess in the Ancient Near East, and was never used to symbolize a god.
- **a masculine reference Lord**

**Sophia's place of habitation is an intermediate one**, above the *demiurge* indeed, but below and outside of the Pleroma" (Irenaeus, *AH*, 1.5.3). If we look at the *Clementine Recognitions*, 2.12, we find **the creative power of God called "Wisdom, the Mother of all things"**. The *Logos* is a Pagan philosophical concept with many meanings. **For Philo, the Logos is the Guide on the path which leads to Sophia and her Gnosis** (Philo, *Op. Mund.* 118-19, *Pug.* 199-200, *Mut. Nom.* 113, 128). M. Scott, in his *Sophia and the Johannie Jesus*, 1992, p. 92, gives as well a great example of the Logos as the path leading to Sophia. Philo describes Moses as embodying the *Logos* and as a child of Sophia" (Philo, *Fug.* 109; L. H. *The Hellenistic Religions*, "Yaweh and the Feminine", 1987, p. 108). Later Christian Gnostics describe their Jesus in the same way. In the Christian Gnostic *Acts of John* Jesus announces: "In me know the *Logos* of Sophia" ("The Hymn of Jesus" (the "Round Dance") in *The Acts of John*).

The concept of the *Logos*, usually translated by the misleading term "Word", is most familiar from the opening lines of *The Gospel of John*, in which Jesus is described as an embodiment of the *Logos*. This passage, written in the form of an antiphonal hymn, is clearly a quotation from an older work. Bultmann considered the original to be a hymn to a Gnostic redeemer (R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 1971. p. 25-31, 61-6). M. Scott in his *Sophia and the Johannie Jesus*, page 88, teaches us the same thing; that the prologue of John comes from an older work concerning the allegorization of the Gnostic redeemer. Everything it says of Jesus the envoy of

Sophia had already been said of the Goddess herself in the Sophia literature" H. Ringgren, Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatisation of Divine Qualities and Functions In Ancient Near East, 1947, states:

***"Everything said of the Logos in the prologue of John is said of the heavenly figure of Wisdom in late Jewish literature."*** R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and early Christianity, agrees that there is nothing new taught in the prologue of the Gospel of John; that is describing the personification of the heavenly figure of Wisdom as applied to the Joshua-Jesus of the New Testament "Christ Myth". More impressive parallels are listed by C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 1970, p. 274-7). ***"The Logos of the Prologue is none other than Sophia."*** (Scott, op. cit., p. 113)..

Philo was based in Alexandria in Egypt, the cultural centre of the ancient world and an eclectic melting-pot of different spiritual traditions. **Here, taking as his mythological models the Pagan figures of Osiris-Dionysus and the Great Mother, this Jewish Gnostic created his own mythic figures of the Logos and Sophia" A little later these same figures would appear as Jesus and Sophia, the central figures of the myths taught by thriving schools of Christian Gnosticism operating throughout the Mediterranean.** Philo's Sophia is, as Engelsmann notes, "a far cry from the Sophia of Proverbs who stands in the streets of Israel calling out to men to forsake the whore and to dine at her own table" (J. C. Engelsmann, The Feminine Dimension of the Divine, 1972), 102). **Nonetheless, for Philo, Sophia is still the embodiment of the unlimited knowledge of God.** (Philo, *See Migr. Abr.* 40-1, *Leg. All.*, 1.77-8).





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# THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF CHRISTIAN GNOSTICISM

The historical record teaches us that by the first half of the first century there were already three distinct schools of Christian Gnosticism, which suggests, once again, that in some form or another Christianity had been in existence for some time. These schools are the:

- **Simonians,**
  - The Simonians were radical internationalists who rejected Judaism and its tribal deity Jehovah as redundant Literalist nonsense. The Simonians were the left-wing revolutionaries who wanted to overthrow Jewish Literalism.
- **Paulines**
  - The Paulists were also internationalists who wanted to free Christianity from close ties with Judaism, but took a more moderate view, seeing Christianity as fulfilling and therefore surpassing Judaism. The Paulists, in the centre, considered Judaism to be superseded by Christianity and therefore obsolete.
- **Ebionites**
  - The Ebionites were nationalists who saw Christianity as a specifically Jewish cult and wanted Christians to conform to traditional Jewish religious customs. The conservative Ebionites saw Christianity as a movement of reform within Judaism.

The issue which divided them was the relationship of Christianity to traditional Jewish religion. The New Testament scholar F. C. Baur (1792-1860) was the first to notice that much of the New Testament only made sense once one realized that there was a major conflict between two rival Christianities, one Jewish in orientation and led by Peter, the other Gentile and led by Paul (R. M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*, R. M. (2000), p. 23).

These three schools can be considered as different wings of early Christianity. None of these Christians were practising Christianity as we would recognize it today. Christian Literalism, from which nearly all forms of modern Christianity have evolved, didn't begin to appear until the middle of the second century.

## THE SIMONIANS

The man defamed by later Christian Literalists as the "father" of Christian Gnosticism was an early first-century Samaritan known as Simon the Magus. The Church Father Irenaeus called Simon "the father of all heretics" (*AH*, 3.1). Justin Martyr wrote his *Second Apology* solely for the purpose of repudiating his fellow countryman: "And I despised the wicked and deceitful doctrine of Simon of my own nation. And if you give this book your authority, we will expose him before all, that, if possible, they may be converted. For this end alone did we compose this treatise." (*Second Apology*, 15.) Shortly after Justin wrote this, The Book of Acts was

**forged, in part to attack Simon; see Acts 8:9.**

***Acts 8:9 9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: (KJV)***

**Justin Martyr, in 150 C.E., clearly did not know this work or he would have quoted it. Its appearance a generation later in the hands of Irenaeus is profoundly suspicious.** Because we have inherited a Roman version of the Jesus story and the Jesus myth in which the chief character dies in Jerusalem, we assume that Christianity was originally an exclusively Jewish cult. **Actually, many early Christians, such as Simon, were Samaritans and there is no evidence to suggest that they set their Christ myth in a Jewish setting.** Today only a small number of Samaritans survive, but at the time they far outnumbered the Jews (A. Welburn, *Gnosis, The Mysteries and Christianity*, 1994, p. 155). Hence it was natural that when the Romans made Palestine a province of the empire they located their administrative centre in Samaria. Samaria had its own distinct religious traditions, also based on the Books of Moses, which rivalled the Jewish Temple cult based in Jerusalem. The Jews considered the Samaritans to have betrayed the Covenant after they refused to take part in Ezra's reforms and rebuilding of the Second Temple, c.450 BCE. The Samaritans worshipped God on Mount Gerizim and revered the Torah of Moses but none of the succeeding books of the Old Testament. Writing in the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr, who was himself a Samaritan, tells us that Simon was "regarded with great reverence by nearly all Samaritans". Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, Chapter 26: "And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god." **This is an amazing testimony to Simon's influence from a source which is nothing but hostile to him.**

Simon is said to have been the most outstanding disciple of John the Baptist. The story goes that when John died Simon was in Alexandria, where he had received a Greek education, so another Samaritan Gnostic, Dositheus, became John's successor. When Simon returned home, however, he became the acknowledged master. **John the Baptist, Simon and Dositheus were linked to the Essenes**, either as envoys or founders of a breakaway school. John teaches in the wilderness, close to where the Essenes were based. Dositheus is said to have come from the same area. Essene teachings show the influence of Persian Zoroastrianism, which would explain why Simon was called "Magus", a Zoroastrian term for a sage. Regarding the correspondences between the Essenes' *Community Rule* and the Zoroastrian *Avesta*, Burgmann writes, "There are so many parallels that this Iranian-Zoroastrian writing, which is very much older, must have served as the foundation for the Qumran text" (A. Welburn, op. cit., 1994, p. 51). **Zoroastrian influence on Gnosticism, particularly its "dualistic" doctrines, has been repeatedly argued for by scholars.** This influence may well have been via Platonism, however, as Colotes, 280-250 BCE, alleged that Plato had borrowed from Zoroaster (Proclus, *In Rpubl.* 2.109). Aristoxenus likewise claimed that Pythagoras had been a pupil of the Chaldaean Zaratas (A. Momiglian, *Alien Wisdom*, 1971, p. 143).

Simon was also known as "Faustus" or "Honoured One". Faustus reappears in history as the name of the Manichean Gnostic who came to debate with the ex-Manichean Augustine. The Faust legend lived on in the work of Marlowe and particularly Goethe (1749-1832). In his quest for the "Eternal Feminine" (the Sophia of the Gnostics), Goethe's Faust travels to ancient Greece to find Helen of Troy, the same Helen who is said to have travelled with Simon Magus. The reappearance of Helen in Goethe's achemical epic is testimony to the persistence of the Gnostic spirit in Europe.

Simon was also described himself as a "Christ". The Church Fathers claimed that Simon considered himself a Christ. The coy statement in *Acts 8:9* that Simon claimed he was "some great one" indicates that he was in fact hailed as a "Christ" (Hippolytus, Book 10; Tertullian, *Against all Heresies*, Chapter 1; etc). Simon, in his "Great Annunciation", claimed to be an incarnation of the "Great Unlimited Power" or "Standing One" and was considered a god by his disciples. Schmithals discerns behind the "Standing One" a reference to the Christ (Welburn, op. cit., p. 159).

His followers regarded him as an embodiment of the "Great Power", the male aspect of the Mystery of God (Ibid., 155ff). He travelled with a spiritual partner called Helen who was seen as an embodiment of the Goddess.



Irenaeus, *AH*, Chapter 23: "Simon of Samaria, from whom all sorts of heresies derive their origin, formed his sect out of the following materials: Having redeemed from slavery at Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, a certain woman named Helena, he was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all." Hippolytus, *Ref.*, 6.14, provides the same testimony. In the *Clementine Homilies*, we are told that "Simon goes about in the company of Helen and, even until now, stirs up the crowds. He says that he has brought down this Helen from the highest heavens to the world; she is the Queen, since she is all-maternal Being and Wisdom (Sophia)" (R. Grant, *Gnosticism: A Sourcebook of Heretical Writings*, 1961, p. 27).

**Many important later Christian Gnostics are part of Simon's lineage, including the first-century Samaritan master Menander, the second century Alexandrian masters Carpocrates, Epiphanes and Basilides, the Syrian master Cerdo, who taught in Rome, and Saturninus of Antioch.** The Christian Literalist Irenaeus complains that "from Simon a multitude of Barbeloites has arisen" (Irenaeus, op. cit., 1.29). These Gnostics developed myths in which the Goddess, called by them "Barbelo", was prominent" (Barbelo, *see especially Allogenes, The Apocryphon of John, Melchizedek, Marsanes, The Three Steles of Seth and Pistis Sophia*. In *Trimorphic Protennoia* Barbelo says of herself: "I am the Image of the Invisible Spirit, and it is through me that the All took shape, and (I am) the Mother (as well as) the Light which she appointed as Virgin ... the incomprehensible Womb, the unrestrainable and immeasurable Voice." NHC, 13.1.38).

The Simonians were enthusiastic eclectics who sought out Gnostic wisdom wherever they could find it. The Literalist Hippolytus tells us that Simon interpreted the words of Moses and the Pagan poets" (Hippolytus, op. cit., 6.14.1). His followers continued this tradition of open mindedness. Basilides even wrote a book on Hinduism. **These Gnostics had no time for nationalistic Jewish Literalism, whose complex religious rules and regulations they regarded as unnecessary mumbo-jumbo. Faith and love were the only pre-requisites to being saved through the experience of Gnosis.** This was especially the teaching of the Alexandrian Platonist Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes. Irenaeus tells us that the Carpocratians thought that souls should have every enjoyment of life, so that when they depart they are deficient in nothing and that freedom must be gained by a complete demonstration of it whilst on Earth (Irenaeus, op. cit., 1.25.4). Clement of Alexandria calls Epiphanes the founder of the school (*Strom.*, 3.5.2). A female follower called Marcellina brought Epiphanes' teachings to Rome, where the sect of the "Marcellians" was flourishing c. 130 CE (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis*, op. cit., 299).

**Simonians waged war on the Jewish Literalists' anthropomorphic image of God as the jealous and despotic tribal deity Jehovah, requiring their initiates to ritually declare their rejection of this false god** (E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 1979, p. 62). W. Barnestone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 626 ff, states that Basilides writes: "Those who confess Jesus as the crucified one are still enslaved to the God of the Jews. He who denies it has been freed and knows the plan of the unbegotten Father".

**These Jewish Gnostics opposed the Jewish Literalists' personification of God for the same reason that Pagan Gnostics mocked the personified gods of Pagan Literalists. For Gnostics, God is the Great Mystery which is the source and essence of all that is. Any idea of God is just that - an idea. Confusing the idea of God with the true ineffable nature of the Mystery is idolatry. The image is mistaken for the essence. To Simonians, the Literalist interpretation of the Old Testament portrays the Mystery of God as a Jewish monarch, which is ridiculous nationalist nonsense.** Cerdo asserts:

**"The God proclaimed by the law and the prophets is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God of the Old Testament is known, but the Father of Jesus Christ is the Unknowable"** (Cerdo, quoted in Irenaeus, op. cit., 1.27.1).

## THE PAULINES

**Of all early Christians, Paul was the most revered by later Gnostics. He was the primary inspiration for two of the most influential schools of Christian Gnosticism, set up by the early second-century**

**masters Marcion and Valentinus.** Christian Gnostics calling themselves "Paulicians" ran the "seven churches" in Greece and Asia Minor that were established by Paul, their **"mother Church" being at Corinth.** The Paulicians can be traced historically to the mid-seventh century. They may in turn derive from the Massalian Gnostics of fourth-century Syria (Y. Stoyanov, The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy, 2000, p. 128-9). The Paulicians survived until the tenth century and were the inspiration for the later Bogomils and Cathars. (Stoyanov, op. cit., 289ff). Stoyanov gives a great detailed examination of the Paulicians, Manichaeans, Massalians and other "heretical" groups, and their part in the emergence of the Bogomils in the Balkans and Bulgaria and the Cathars in southern France and Italy. Arthur Evans famously called the Bogomils the first Protestants in western Europe, bearers of what he called "Gnostic Puritanism".

**Marcion was originally a student of the Simonian Gnostic Cerdo, but when he set up his own highly successful school it was Paul he placed centre-stage as the "Great Messenger".** Even his later Literalist critics acknowledged that Marcion was "a veritable sage" and that his influence was considerable (Jerome, quoted by both J. Godwin, Mystery Religions in the Ancient World, 1981, p. 85).

Valentinus tells us he received the secret teachings of Christianity from his master Theudas, who had in turn received them from Paul (Clement of Alexandria, op. cit., 7.17). Valentinus said that Jesus used metaphors in public and his complete teachings were passed on to his disciples in private, and that this was the real meaning of Luke 8:9-10: **"The knowledge about the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but to the rest it comes by means of parables so that they may look but not see and listen but not understand."** (Irenaeus, AH, 1:3:1.) **This secret tradition provides the key that is essential for a complete understanding of Jesus' message, as one of his followers stated:** "The scriptures are ambiguous and the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition." (Ibid., 3:2:1.) The Valentinians claimed that the secret teachings are meaningful only to those who are spiritually mature (pneumatically initiated) because "their value can be judged only on a spiritual basis" (*1 Corinthians* 2:14).

***1 Cor 2:14 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (KJV)***

Paul and the other apostles revealed these teachings only to those who were "spiritually mature" (ibid., 2:6).

Based on these teachings and the influence of Paul Valentinus founded his own influential school of Christian Gnosticism, which survived as a loose alliance of individual teachers until it was forcibly closed down in the fifth century by the Literalist Roman Church (L. H. Martin, The Hellenistic Religions, 1987, 138). **The number of second and third-century Valentinians that we can still name is testimony to Valentinus' importance: Alexander, Ambrose, Axionicus, Candidus, Flora, Heracleon, Mark, Ptolemy, Secundus, Theodotus and Theotimus** (B. Layton, The Gnostic Scriptures, 1987, p. 267). The Valentinian movement was divided into two wings, the Italic school founded by Ptolemy and Heracleon, and the Oriental school founded by Theodotus and Marcus.

**Paul was such an important figure in the Christian community that at the end of the second century the newly emerging school of Christian Literalism in Rome could not simply reject him as a misguided heretic but felt compelled to reshape him into a Literalist.** Pagels, in The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 161, suggests that ecclesiastical Christians might have preferred to exclude Paul's letters "but it was too late, he was already a chief apostle and stood in high regard. **By the time of Marcion and his First New Testament it was too late since Marcion presented to the world upon a large scale the existing Pauline corpus of writings which taught an "allegorical Gnostic Christ."** The emerging Catholic Church at Rome had now only one choice which was to rewrite the New Testament and include within it forged epistles and Gospels under Apostle's names which refuted the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" and "Joshua-Jesus" and in its place present a "literalistic" interpretation of "the Christ" and "Joshua-Jesus".



**Towards the end of the second century the Literalists therefore took this "forgery" approach. The Acts of the Apostles, the Pastoral Letters, 2 Thessalonians, 3 Corinthians and other documents were forged to refute specific Gnostic/Pauline doctrines in the apostle's own name** (G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 201). **They forged in his name the now thoroughly discredited "Pastoral Letters", in which Paul is made to spout anti-Gnostic propaganda** (Freke and Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, 160ff). **Throughout his genuine letters, however, Paul uses characteristically Gnostic language and gives Gnostic teachings, a fact that is deliberately obscured by Literalist translators. It is ONLY in the later forged New Testament propaganda in Paul's name from the likes of Irenaeus and others do we find anti-Gnostic doctrines put into the mouth of Paul and the apostles in the later Gospels.**

Like later Christian Gnostics, Paul addresses his teachings to two levels of Christian initiates, called *psychics* and *pneumatics*, describing the latter as "having Gnosis".

***1 Cor 2:14 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (KJV)***

The Gnostic Theodotus tells us that Paul taught in "two ways at once" in order to reach both psychic and pneumatic Christians (Clement, *Exc. Theod.*, 23.3-4; Pagels, op. cit.).

Of himself Paul writes, ***"I may not be much of a speaker, but I have Gnosis."***

***2 Cor 11:6 6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge (Gnosis); but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. (KJV)***

Paul sees his mission as awakening in initiates an awareness of "the Christ within" - the one "consciousness of God" - by "instructing all without distinction in the ways of Sophia, so as to make each one an initiated member of Christ's body" (Colossians 1:28).

***Col 1:28 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)***

Paul tells us that when he personally experienced Christ it was as a vision of light on the road to Damascus. In *Acts 9:3* Saul sets out to Damascus armed with letters of authority from the high priest in order to persecute followers of "the Way". It is unlikely that Paul was headed for Damascus in Syria, as this was a Roman province over which Jerusalem had no authority. Qumran, however, with its community of fiercely anti-Jerusalem Jews, might well have been Paul's destination. The Essenes referred to their faith as "the Way" and the Dead Sea Scrolls also refer to the "Mystery" that has been hidden for a long time and is now revealed to the elect, a sentiment expressed by Paul in *1 Corinthians 2:7*, *Romans 16:25* and *Ephesians 3:3-9* (H. Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1995, p. 62ff; J. Allegro, The Dead Sea Scrolls, 1956, p. 145). **"Damascus" was a code word used by the Essenes to refer to their base in Qumran, which suggests that Paul, like Simon, had Essene affiliations.** The *Damascus Document* found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls tells of how the "Teacher of Righteousness" took the "righteous remnant" (the Essenes) into the wilderness where they entered into a "new covenant in the land of Damascus" (6.19; 19.33). **Paul uses the same language as the Essenes**, for example when he **describes human beings as being enslaved by the powers of fate, imagined as "the elemental rulers of the cosmos".** Josephus tells us that the Essenes regarded **"fate [heimarmene] as the mistress of all things" (Antiquities, 13:174).** Notice if you will the "feminine" aspect of this "power" as used by Paul.

Let us look at Galatians 4:3

***Gal 4:3 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (KJV)***

Here Paul refers to "bondage under the elemental rulers of the cosmos", a phrase equivalent to the astrological meaning of *heimarmene* seen above (L. H. Martin, The Hellenistic Religions, p. 106-7).

For Paul these elemental rulers of the cosmos in Gal. 4:3 are the same "archons of this dark cosmos"

*Eph 6:12 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers [kosmokrator] of the darkness of this world [aion-age], against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)*

It is from these from "elements of the world" and these "archons of this dark cosmos" [principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age] which "Christ has set us free".

*Gal 5:1 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (KJV)*

*2 Cor 3:17 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (KJV)*  
(L.H. Martin, The Hellenistic Religions, 1987, p. 123).

Paul, like Simon, was an internationalist who wanted to liberate Christianity from any baggage it had inherited from Jewish Literalism. He writes dismissively of the traditional Jewish Law:

*Phil 3:8-11 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (KJV)*

*Philippians 2:8 and 2:10-11*

Again like Simon, Paul is adamant that the true God is the ineffable Oneness, not the national Jewish deity:

*Rom 3:29-30 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (KJV)*

For Paul, Jewish Literalism divides Jews from Gentiles. It is a "curse" which could be healed by the syncretic figure of the Jewish Messiah/Pagan Godman Jesus.

*Gal 3:13-14 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (KJV)*

Everything might seem kosher to you about the above verse until you come to realize that Paul has twisted the import of that verse taken from the Hebrew and purposefully misapplied that verse to his Jesus Christ and at the same time gave it a new meaning.

*Eph 2:14-16 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall*



*of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (KJV)*

Paul is assumed by the Christian laity to be the author of the Book of Ephesians. That being so one might suppose that it was Paul who is saying that his Jesus Christ "has broken down the enmity that stood like a dividing wall" between "Gentiles and Jew", creating "out of the two a single humanity in himself, thereby making peace. This was his purpose, to reconcile the two in the Oneness of God.

**Answer for yourself:** First of all since this verse put "flesh" upon "the Christ" then is Paul the author of this epistles? No. Scholars today are very skeptical of this late epistles as being from Paul and advise that again this late epistle is representative of Rome's anti-Gnostic attempt to reorient the theology expressed in Marcion's First New Testament concerning "the Christ".

However, although Paul wants to dump Judaism, he doesn't completely condemn it, as Simon did. He accepts that it is appropriate for those Jews who wish to maintain their indigenous traditions, but maintains that it is irrelevant to Gentiles and Jewish initiates who wish to leave the old ways behind. For Paul, Jesus *fulfils* the laws and the prophets, precisely because he takes us beyond them.

Of Paul's later followers, the Valentinians maintained this more liberal approach. Marcion, however, amplified Paul's criticism of Judaism; something we should expect since Marcion believed that only Paul understood correctly the message of "the Christ." He wrote a famous treatise called *Contradictions*, setting out all the differences between the God of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament. As a way of distancing Jesus from the figure of the Jewish Messiah, Marcionites, and others with a similar perspective, claimed to follow "Jesus Chrestos" (Jesus the Good) rather than "Jesus Christus" (Jesus the Messiah). (B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*, 1987, p. 321). From as early as the middle of the first century through to the fifth century we hear of those calling themselves "Chrestians" rather than "Christians". Several Gnostic groups are known to have referred to Jesus not as Christ, but as Crestus, "the Good" (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 249). According to Suetonius (*Life of Claudius*, 25), in a text assumed to refer to Christians causing trouble in Rome in the middle of the first century, these Jews are said to be followers of Crestus.

**Answer for yourself:** Since we found out that "Crestus" is another name for the "allegorical" Gnostic Christ and that riots over this "allegorical Christ" and non-human "Christ" occurred in Rome then how in the world could this be a "human Jesus" or a "human Christ"? It could not! This again destroys any hope that these riots over "Crestus" in Rome was over a human being or a human "Christ" as some apologists and anti-Gnostics assert.

An inscription found in a Syrian Marcionite church dated 318 CE reads: "The Lord and Saviour Jesus the Good" - Chrestos, not Christos. In the earliest New Testament we possess, the Codex Sinaiticus (late fourth century) three passages - Acts 11:26, 26:28, 1 Peter 4:16 - use the name "Chrestian" for Christian. Profoundly influenced by Plato as they were, the Gnostics probably chose this name as Plato had used it as the highest definition of God.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find a trace of this "Crestus" in the gospel accounts? Yes.

A trace of this is left in the gospels where Jesus echoes the words of Pythagoras, who was called "wise" and responded: "Why do you call me wise" No one is wise but God." In the gospels Jesus responds to being called "good" in similar fashion: *"Why callest thou me good" There is none good but one, that is, God."* (*Matthew 19:17.*) This novel twist must have delighted readers of the Gnostic texts.

## THE EBIONITES

The other school of early first-century Christian Gnosticism was the Ebionites or "Poor Ones". They were based in Jerusalem, where Paul says he visited them. Ebionites wanted Christian Gnosticism to retain its ties with traditional Jewish religion. They emphasized that Christianity was for Jews and that if Gentiles wanted to embrace it they would have to undergo circumcision and keep all the Laws of Moses.

Paul vehemently attacks Ebionite leaders, calling them "evil" and "dogs". He complains that they "proclaim a different Jesus" from himself.

*2 Cor 11:4 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (KJV)*

He ridicules them for arrogantly regarding themselves as "super-messengers" because of their Jewishness, dismissing them as "axe-wielding circumcision party" who might as well "go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves!

*Gal 5:12 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. (KJV)*

Ebionite letters, attributed to Clement of Rome, retaliate with similar ferocity, attacking Paul as inspired by Satan."

G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 56ff, share with the reader the **Pseudo-Clementine polemic against Paul. Paul is regarded as "the enemy" and a new gospel had to be sent out to correct his "heresies"** (*Pseudo-Clement Hom.*, 2.17.4). **According to Epiphanius, The Ascension of James (a hero of the Ebionite Gnostics) told how Paul had originally been Greek but had gone over to Judaism because he wanted to marry the high priest's daughter.** This means Paul was originally a Gentile who later converted to Judaism. No wonder he has a "Roman" name and Roman citizenship. When she turned him down he wrote against the Jews and ridiculed their law (Ludemann, op. cit., 62). For a much more in-depth analysis of these events let me recommend The Jesus Mysteries, 1991, p. 161 ff.

Paul's internationalist Christianity flourished amongst Gentiles, but was largely unacceptable to Jews. **He reports that only four Jewish Christians worked with him and that he was often attacked by Jews for preaching his heretical vision of the mystical Messiah Jesus.**

*Colossians 4:10-12.* Paul writes,

*"Of the Jewish Christians, these are the only ones that work with me,"* and names Mark, Aristachus, Barnabas and Jesus Justus. Paul recruits Gentiles but is attacked by Jews in Antioch (Acts 13:45ff)

*Acts 13:45 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. (KJV)*

Only in Ephesus is he attacked solely by angry Pagans (19:19).

*Acts 19:19 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (KJV)*

**Ebionite Gnosticism, on the other hand, due to its ties with Judaism and insistence on circumcision, made little impact beyond the Jewish community, although it did survive for hundreds of years and influenced the creation of Islam.** Epiphanius, c. 375 CE, describes Ebionism as still existing in Syria two centuries before the birth of Islam. Several scholars have suggested that Ebionism was developed and amplified



in Islam. Von Harnack defined Islam as "a transformation on Arab soil of a Jewish religion that had itself been transformed by Gnostic Judaeo-Christianity" (von Harnack, A., *Dogmengeschichte*, 11.537, quoted in H. Corbin, *Cynical Time and the Ismaili Gnostics*, 1983, p. 66).

The real importance of the Ebionites is not who they were, but the fantasies which were later created about them. Because they were based in Jerusalem, later Christian Literalists claimed that they were the original disciples of the historical Jesus. However, in the second century, when the Christian Literalist Melito of Sardis went to Jerusalem hoping to find the descendants of the original disciples, he found only Ebionite Gnostics, whose Christianity was inspired by "heretical" scriptures such as *The Gospel of the Ebionites*, *The Gospel of the Hebrews*, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* and *The Gospel of the Nazarenes*. **Irenaeus calls the Ebionites "Gnostics"** (AH, 1.26). Eusebius records that it was already too late for Melito to rehabilitate the **Jerusalem Christians as they had all "become" Ebionite heretics** (HE, 4.26.14). We suggest they always had been (Ludemann, op. cit., 31, 247, note 111; Freke and Gandy, *The Jesus Mysteries*, 172ff). **According to Klijn there were three Jewish/Christian gospels circulating in the second century - The Gospel of the Ebionites (east of the Jordan), The Gospel according to the Nazarenes (Beroia in Syria) and The Gospel of the Hebrews (Egypt)**. (J. M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 1978), and J. Griffin Boardman, and O Murray, *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, 1986, p. 10). For the remains of The Gospel of the Ebionites, see W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 336ff).

**Paul happens to mention the names of some Ebionites in his letters.** He refers to a particularly conservative leader called James as a "brother of the Lord".

*Gal 1:19 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. (KJV)*

Later Literalists took this literally and became convinced that not only was there an historical Jesus, but that Paul knew his brother. Actually the title "brother of the Lord" was used by Christian Gnostics to refer to each other and is not specific to James. "Brother" appears throughout Paul's letters, clearly a common designation Christians gave to each other. Mark's gospel gives Jesus four brothers and more than 500 "brothers" are mentioned in *1 Corinthians* 15:6. The Gnostic *Apocalypse of James* categorically tells us that James was not literally Jesus' sibling. James is "said to be the Lord's brother only in a purely spiritual sense" (J. M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 1978, p. 260).

Paul also mentions a Cephas. Because the Hebrew name "Cephas" means the same as the Greek name "Peter", Literalists assume Paul to be talking about the Simon Peter of the gospels, **but actually at the time that Paul was writing, the gospel story as we know it had not been created. Christ was a mystical, timeless figure, not yet the hero of a historical romance set in Judaea, and the character of Simon Peter had yet to be invented. Paul is definitely not writing about the Peter of the gospels. He is extremely critical of the Cephas he mentions, to an extent that would not be credible if he were talking about the historical Jesus' right-hand man - especially when Paul had never met Jesus himself.** Paul never mentions any of the gospel events to do with Simon Peter or the times that Jesus is portrayed as being hostile to Simon Peter, even when simply mentioning one of these criticisms would clearly clinch his argument with Cephas. G.A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist*, 1975, 124ff, asserts that "There is nothing in Paul's letters to support the view that the Cephas he mentions had the career and connection with Jesus alleged of Peter in the gospels." The recently discovered *Letter of the Apostles* lists Peter and Cephas as separate apostles. It is odd that the gospels refer 156 times to Peter, who starts life as Simon but is later renamed Peter by Jesus (Mark 3:16). **The identification of Cephas with Peter is based on only one reference in John 1:42. Here Peter is renamed Cephas and then never referred to in this way again!** Paul mentions a Cephas five times, but never identifies him as Peter. **Only once, in Galatians 2:7-9, does Paul mention a Peter; however, a close look at this passage leaves one with the question as to why the same man is called by two different names in the same sentence.**

*Gal 2:7-9 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter*

*to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:;) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. (KJV)*





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## GNOSTIC PRINCIPLES AND THE THREE CLASSIFICATIONS OF MANKIND

In the Gospels, Christ himself explained to the disciples, privately, teachings which the "multitude" could only hear in parables. In the Gospels also, many of his sayings were said to be, for a time, beyond the understanding of the apostles themselves.

*Matt 13:11 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. (KJV)*

*Mark 4:9 9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (KJV)*

As we saw repeatedly in previous articles one of the identifies of Gnosticism is that their teachers taught "gnosis," "mysteries" and "hidden knowledge" to only certain people. The masses were not privy to this hidden understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus taught in parables and obscured the deeper meanings of many of the things he taught.

*Matt 13:14-15 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (KJV)*

*Luke 8:10 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. (KJV)*

Central to the formation of a universal Christian doctrine is the question: "How can a religion on such a high level be taught to, and made the rule of conduct for, the multitudes?"

By "multitudes" is meant not necessarily the poor and unlettered, but the great mass of those only superficially interested and with little spiritual understanding - often including "the great ones" of the world.

**Answer for yourself:** How then could the Christian teachings that were handed down, and the principles underlying them that were formulated, expounded, and explained, be understood by the indiscriminate mass?

There were geographical and cultural differences dividing the hearers of these doctrines, but the differences of level - spiritual and intellectual - would seem to present an even greater problem. "No great historical religion has wholly succeeded in bringing its message to the masses without making some concessions to the weakness of average humanity" (S. Angus, Religious Quests of the Greek and Roman World).

**Answer for yourself:** A further question then arises - how great must these concessions be and how much do the

concessions become distortions?

## GNOSTICISM SAW THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE

The Gnostics gave an answer to this question, though their type of answer came to be considered dangerously heretical by the Great Roman Church. The Valentinian Gnostics held that people did not come into the world basically alike, but that there were three definite classes of human beings:

- There were the "choics": the earthly carnal ones, only concerned with the material world.
- There were the "psychics", who lived by faith and good works - in fact, the ordinary Christian church-goers.
- There were the "pneumatics", the Gnostics, themselves, who had the Divine Spark in them and could ascend to their divine origin, because, according to the Gnostic myth, some seed of Sophia's divinity - Sophia, the Desire for Wisdom - was implanted in Gnostic Man.

The Redeemer came for the Gnostics and for those Psychics who could repent.

*Mark 2:17 17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (KJV)*

In most Gnostic systems, the Psychics could never reach the height of the Pneumatics, and their heaven was that of a psychic Christ, "seated at the right hand of the Creator-God". In all systems the Gnostics could ascend with the true Christ to the First Beginnings. The Choics had no hope.

For those who held these beliefs, true, inner Christianity could be understood only by the one class of people, born on a higher level than the rest. Many could only receive it in a limited, exterior form, and the great mass could not receive it at all.

This doctrine of the three different levels of men seemed to do away with the difficulty of how Christianity could be explained to all people, regardless of their understanding. It seemed to take into account the many hard sayings in the Gospels. But though it solved some difficulties, it raised an even greater one: predestination. If men, from their birth, were divided into these categories, their destiny was already carved out for them. In many Gnostic systems, the Pneumatics were saved already, and in all, the lowest class was barred, from birth, from any possibility of growth. Only the Psychics had some choice, and that was limited.

The idea of a hierarchy among human beings has been, consciously or unconsciously, accepted until modern times. It gradually degenerated into an acceptance of social grades within society, and has now virtually disappeared in the West.

The concept of a class of men, by nature spiritually more advanced than others, was acceptable to the people of the first centuries. That some were born with an innate striving after Truth and would sacrifice all for this striving was clear to the Gnostics. *"This is the manner of those who possess (something) from above of the immeasurable greatness, as they stretch out after the one alone, the perfect one, the one who is there for them."* (Gospel of Truth)

According to many Gnostic teachers the essential purpose of these "spiritual ones" was to strive upwards, so that through their efforts they could help others. For other Gnostic groups, these were already "the perfect" and needed no salvation. This latter conception was to find its way into many later "heresies", through the Middle Ages and beyond. As in so many religious teachings "heretical" and "orthodox", there may have been insights of value in Gnostic ideas, but these also held dangers when not fully understood, or when their balance was not kept. There was the continuous danger of the "simple" exalting and venerating as "perfect" those still far from perfection. For the "perfect", there was the danger of Antinomism, which



**means literally "the incompatibility between two laws".**

Antinomism was not an "heretical" system, but was, like Docetism, a tendency that appeared and reappeared in many schools and sects. **It was based on the misunderstanding of an idea found in St Paul's epistles, (particularly in Romans), that those who lived by grace were beyond the Law.** Paul was teaching that when all thoughts and deeds are moved by the energy of God there can be no sin - the true Spirit within man does not sin. This was distorted to mean:- "It does not matter what carnal sins the 'perfect' commit; these are only in the 'natural' body and have no connection with the 'spiritual'."

In the original Gnostic conception it seems that the "pneumatics" were not so much the privileged ones, as those from whom much more was demanded - much more than from the lower orders. ***"For, unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke XII 48).***

Today, the idea of different levels of humanity, as described by the Gnostics, would be an abomination and certainly not "politically correct." Not only would it seem contrary to the idea of an all-loving God, but would go against all modern conceptions of "democracy". **In the first centuries, it was not these objections that made this doctrine heretical, but the implicit denial of Free Will contained in it. It implied predestination.**

Strangely enough, St Augustine, in the fourth century, one of the greatest of the Church Fathers, whose teaching was to be the most powerful influence in the Catholic Church for over a thousand years, was stronger in his ideas on predestination than the Gnostics ever were. The foreknowledge of an omnipotent God, on the one hand, and the consequences of Original Sin on the other were the foundations of his philosophy: from the beginning of the world, all that is to happen is already in the Mind of the Creator, and the fallen are unable of themselves to rectify the results of their sins. His refutation of Pelagianism led him to the explicit formulation of these ideas.

**The existence of a pre-ordained "elect" was a central tenet of Gnosticism, though it never became part of Catholic dogma; yet the spiritual superiority of some souls over others appears to be an obvious fact.** If there is a Divinely planned universe, this must be part of the plan. If this is so, how can it be reconciled with man's freedom of will?

**The Gnostics made the problem less intractable for themselves by their belief in pre-birth - in a life of the soul before this life on earth. The true Gnostic "knew" that he was a spiritual being, now imprisoned in a soul and body as a result of Sophia's Fall.** Moreover, the Gnostics subscribed to a belief similar to that held in many Eastern religions - though they never clearly stated this - a belief in **further lives after this one.**

**Some Gnostic schools held that there was a secret teaching given by Christ to his disciples and handed on by them to the chosen ones - the elect. We saw the the passages above that this is certain. Many of the Gnostic documents discovered at Nag Hammadi purport to be extracts from these secret teachings.** Found at Nag Hammadi were the Apocryphon of John, and Apocalypses of James, of Paul and of Peter. These documents were in the form of dialogues between Jesus and the particular Apostle who was to hand on that secret teaching.

Some of the sayings in the Gnostic books seem artificial and contrived, as if trying to prove specific Gnostic theses. But there are others, particularly in the *Gospel of St Thomas*, that are not like this. The fragments of this "Gospel" found at Nag Hammadi have been dated about 400 AD; it is the most complete Apocryphal gospel that we have. It is written in the Coptic language and was presumably translated from an earlier Greek original, thought to be of the second century. Some scholars believe that it is closely related to St Mark's Gospel, assumed by many to be the main source, or based on the main source, of the Synoptic Gospels.

**The Gnostics called the Gospel of Thomas the Secret Sayings of Jesus.** The preface to this gospel reads: *"These are the secret words which Jesus, the Living, spoke and which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote. And He said: He who will find the interpretation of these words will not taste death."* (Quoted by R.M. Grant in The Secret Sayings of Jesus) **In the Gospel of Thomas, "to understand" is equivalent to "keeping the word of Jesus".**

The *Gospel of Thomas* had disappeared and was not discovered until 1945, and then only in its Coptic translation. But Bishop Hippolytus mentioned it in the third century, saying that it was used as their sacred book by the Naassenes, a second-century Gnostic sect, whose doctrines, as described by Hippolytus, seem to be closely related to the teaching of "Thomas".

The Naassenes were a branch of the Ophites and, like them, they revered the snake as the symbol of wisdom. They may even have identified this symbol with Christ. **As with all Gnostic schools, they believed that Christ came to reveal saving knowledge to chosen disciples and that traces of their gnosis could be found in ancient traditions - in the Jewish Scriptures and even in Oriental religious teachings.**

**They believed - and their beliefs were similar to those found in Egyptian Hermetic literature:**

- **That the Primal Being was three-fold, spiritual, psychic and material, and**
- **That all three elements formed Archetypal Man, who descended to earth and begot human nature.**
- **That all three elements entered into Jesus and worked through him.**
- **That humanity consisted of three types, as all Gnostics believed.**

The different grades of humanity in the Naassene system were also akin to those described by the Gnostics. There were the "gnostics", the "psychics" and the "choics"; and so there were three types of "church" - "the elect" (the gnostic), "the called" (probably the Christian churches of the time) and "the captive" (which would be for the rest of humanity). **The "gnostics" were those who were able to receive and understand the saving knowledge.**

**The main theme of the Sayings collected in the Gospel of Thomas is that true religious experience is the recognition of one's own identity.** *"When you know yourselves, then you will be known; and you will know that you are the sons of the Living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you are in poverty and you are poverty."* (Quoted by R.M. Grant in Secret Sayings of Jesus).

The collectors of the Secret Sayings claimed, not only that many of these Sayings were unknown to the Christian churches, but that the Canonical Gospels, as read in the churches, were merely "psychic teaching" and should be interpreted by those who knew the secret tradition. *The Gospel of Thomas* was such an interpretation.

**In the Gospel of Thomas, it is the inner meanings of Jesus' Sayings that alone have importance.** The Kingdom of Heaven is never seen as a consummation to be looked for in the future, but exclusively as a **spiritual state within a man** - in fact, **the state of self-knowledge.** There is no mention of the Resurrection, and the idea of resurrection is given in purely spiritual terms - *"Come into Being as you pass away."* **Human existence is not true being; true being is only achieved when human existence is transcended. Salvation was not seen as an act of God nor as something that could take place in the future, but as the present acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge of where a man comes from, who he is, and where he is going is the kernel of Gnosticism.** This knowledge is not given by intellectual instruction, but it is the possession of a special revelation for those capable of receiving it. **The Gnostic attitude to Christian tradition, therefore, necessarily implied the handing down of secret teaching to an inner group - to people with developed understanding.**



The *Gospel of Truth*, which was mentioned in the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus but which has only recently been discovered among the Nag Hammadi documents, does not pretend to give the words of Jesus himself, but is about him and about the theme, central to Gnosticism - *"If one has knowledge, he is from above... Having knowledge, he does the will of the one who called him... He who is to have knowledge in this manner knows where he comes from and where he is going."*

Irenaeus did not explicitly reject this "Gospel"; he said only that it was unlike the other four. But the "orthodox" Church never accepted into its teaching the existence of a chosen grade of believers, and Irenaeus affirmed that there could be no hidden teaching, or else the successors of the apostles would have spoken of it.

By the end of the second century, the accepted Roman Canon of Scripture was more or less as we know it now. The alteration and replacement of the earlier Gnostic New Testament of Marcion and Paul had been, for the most part, accomplished. It is not difficult to see why what was accepted was accepted. Rome was not accepting an allegorical understanding of Divine concepts has had been done by the Ancients and the Gnostics; they literalized everything and invented many epistles and gospel writings to ensure this interpretation of "the Christ myth." It is equally no more difficult to understand why many existing documents from Marcion's First New Testament were added to in the later Roman construction of the Second New Testament. To this also no more difficult to understand why some documents from Marcion's First Gnostic New Testament were left out of Rome's Second New Testament. As far as Rome was concerned the Gnostic Redeemer, "the Christ" had to be stripped of its non-human status and presented to a literalistic Greek world in "literalistic" manner if it was ever to be accepted and unity ever to be brought to the Roman Empire.

There was a *Gospel of the Hebrews* mentioned by Jerome, theologian of the third century and by other ecclesiastical writers of the time. Sayings of Jesus were sometimes quoted by them from a source now unknown to us. One of these, ascribed to Jesus though appearing in no known Gospel, is this teaching on prayer: *"Ask for the great things and God will add unto you the little things"* (Quoted by Maurice Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine*). Some of the Gnostic "gospels" were also in circulation at this time. In the late nineteenth century, fragments of a *Gospel of Peter* were discovered in Upper Egypt. Eusebius, an "orthodox" Church historian of the fourth century, had mentioned it, saying that in the year 190 there were queries about the *Gospel of Peter* and that it was rejected by the Church leaders as giving an unreal and mythological picture of Jesus.

What was agreed to be Apostolic authorship became the test for inclusion in the Canon of Scripture. Notice I said "agreed" to be Apostolic. Sadly truthfulness did not matter to Rome when constructing their Second New Testament and many writings were forged in names of dead Apostles and Paul in order to promote their authority among the people. It is a fact and most probable that fear of Gnostic heresy excluded all writings that seemed tinged with it. The Apocryphal gospels portrayed Jesus as the Divine principle, the totality of authentic being, but not as a human being, living a human life at a definite period of time. So one reason for the rejection of these gospels may have been that they had no connection with historical fact. Historical reliability was considered to be an essential ingredient of "orthodox" Christian teaching. The Gnostics new better as "the Christ" was a Divine principle and not a human person and had been understood as such since the earliest dawn of mankind. One only needs to become familiar with Egyptian religion and its religious concepts to understand this fact.

The fear of Gnosticism even brought the Fourth Gospel under suspicion. *"You shall know the Truth and the Truth will make you free"* (John 8: 32), was thought by some Gnostic schools to sum up their whole system; and the first fourteen verses of St John's Gospel would also be especially relevant for them. Nevertheless by the time that the four New Testament Gospels had secured acceptance by the masses then there was never serious doubt about them becoming the the kernel of Christian Scripture due to their popularity among the people regardless of traces Gnosticism still mixed within them following Rome's purge of Gnosticism from the

**New Testament. Hard as they tried Rome was not able to destroy all traces of earlier Gnostic thought from the New Testament even though they tried. One skilled in Gnostic thought could yet spot Gnosticism and this explains why Gnostics relied heavily on Pauline epistles to promote their religious doctrines.**

**That there was a secret teaching given orally to chosen and specially ordained pupils, cannot, of course, be disproved, though the existence of such a teaching was strongly denied by the Great Church. The beginning of this article and the passages listed from the Gospels prove that Jesus believed in a secret teaching and taught this "mystery" to his "elect." This should make us rethink and ponder just what we are reading when picking up the New Testament and what parts that we read "literally" should be understood "allegorically" as did the earliest followers of Jesus. But belief in the possibility of such a teaching entered into many of the early Christian heresies and unorthodox schools of thought, and is one of the reasons why the early heresies are especially important in studying the development of Christianity. If this "heretical" belief is true, then Christianity, as it developed, has deviated from that original religious doctrines and dogmas accepted and taught by Jesus and his earliest followers. The realization of this fact should not only be terribly arlarming but should motivate you as a child of God to devote your life to recovering these Divine Truths. It did me!**





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## THE TWO ALEXANDRIAN TEACHERS

By the later Roman Church Fathers of the Catholic Church Gnosticism will be regarded as the most serious of all the threats to the existence of a unified and Catholic Church. It had to be eradicated in the eyes of Rome. That means not only the extermination of those holding these religious tenants through crusades and murder but their religious writings had to be destroyed as well. If these writings could not be destroyed and earased from the memory of the masses then they had to be altered, added to, and deleted in order to confuse if not purge them of their Gnostic reliigiious thought. The purge of existing Ancient turth begins! Had it not been for the discovery in 1945-1946 of the Nag Hammadi Library of Coptic Gnostic texts that revolutionized our traditional understanding of Gnosticism and the true origins of earliest Christianity then we would not know what we do today about the diverence of Christianity from its earliest religious tenants. But Gnosticism also contains within it ideas important for later times. Gnostic tendencies reappear in later heresies, especially in those of the late Middle Ages. They appear in some religious groups today - for example, in certain groups formed for meditation, or for the achievement of greater spiritual consciousness, both within and without the mainstream churches.

The central aim of the second-century teachers of Gnosticism was to establish an understandable Christian philosophy and a system to live by. The fourth-century Roman controversialists, on the other hand, were concerned with refutation of error in points of doctrine, and the fourth and fifth-century heresies arose out of the exploration or defence of such points. These controversies were of more fundamental importance than sometimes might appear, but, nevertheless, their argument was basically an intellectual one of definition. Those who belonged to and those who attacked the Gnostic schools were concerned to discover what Christianity was; for above all, the Gnostic teachings regarding God and man's role in God's creation, considered heresies by later Rome, were spreading at a time when Christian doctrines and modes of worship were still in a state of formation in Roman Catholicism.

These early heresies, from what we can find out about them, would seem to exemplify the most interesting elements in all "great heresies" - that is to say, the teaching may have contained an idea of great value, but the teacher may have expounded it before he had attained sufficient stature himself fully to comprehend it; or the teaching may have fallen into the wrong hands and so become distorted or trivialized; or it may have lost its balance through over-emphasis. Hints of all these things can be found in the discovered records of the Gnostic sects.

But there is more to it than this. The question has already arisen - how much has been lost in condemning the Gnostic schools and in turning away from them? It is here that the study of Gnosticism is important, because this is a question that cannot be ignored and must be constantly returned to.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND HIS PUPIL ORIGEN

Clement of Alexandria and Origen - Christian theologians of the second and the beginning of the

**third centuries - did not reject all Gnostic ideas.** Clement of Alexandria (150 To 215 AD), Presbyter and **head of the Christian catechetical school in that city, often quoted from the Gnostics.** This is startling in light of later Roman Catholic teaching that Gnosticism has to be eradicated from the face of the earth and did its best to accomplish the task. Clement of Alexandria considered Valentinus and his school to be Christians bent on finding the truth, though led into error by misunderstanding Greek and pagan philosophies.

**Origen, (185 to 254 C.E.) was Clement's successor as Presbyter of the school. Both he and Clement had much in common and much sympathy with the Gnostics, especially with the Valentinians; but the Alexandrians' views, though influential, were not incorporated into "orthodoxy", and several of Origen's ideas were actually condemned as heretical in Councils of the fifth and sixth centuries.**

Clement, the "blessed presbyter", as he was called, was revered by all early Christian writers as a truly saintly man. He was acknowledged as a Saint of the Church until the eighteenth-century Pope, Benedict XIV, having read and believed a hostile account of Clement's work by Photius, a ninth-century ecclesiastical writer, excluded Clement's name from the catalogue of Saints. This was, and is, regretted by many.

**Clement's ideal was the Christian Gnostic. "The true gnostic is the Lord's brother and friend and son,"** he wrote in his Stromateis (meaning "miscellaneous collection" - literally, "bag of oddments"). And he even went so far as to say, **"The gnostic practises being God, and has already become God".** (Strom iv 23). **Like the Valentinians, he did not equate the saving knowledge, necessary for perfection, with intellectual enquiry, though he felt strongly that reason had an important part to play.**

**In Clement's teaching, true experiential knowledge comes through the continued practice of faith and love. He disagreed with the Gnostic conception of the world as evil. But anything which he thought to be of value in the Gnostic systems Clement accepted and made use of, just as he made use of Greek philosophy, which he held to be the forerunner of Christianity, for him the highest exposition of truth.** In fact, for Clement, Christianity was essentially a philosophy in its original sense of "love of wisdom" - a search for wisdom and the true way to gain holiness (wholeness).

**Clement wrote that Truth is Truth wherever it is found, and it is everywhere the word of God. "It is the unique Word, which has given out to each nation, through the angel set over it, the form of wisdom proper to it. Wisdom is one in principle but multi-form in presentation. This same Word manifests itself anew in Christ, but the same pattern remains,"** (as quoted in Daniélou and Marrou, The Christian Centuries - The First Six Hundred Years). Clement was never formally attacked for his ideas, but they seem to have been forgotten and set aside.

**Christ, as Clement taught, was essentially a teacher and a revealer, who came to lead men, through wisdom, to become Sons of God.** Like the Gnostics, he thought that there were grades of Christians. There were the "pistes", who accepted Christ without knowing why and who worked only in obedience and for a hoped-for reward. These formed the great body of the baptized. There were also the "pneumatics", who had some knowledge in addition to this and knew what they were doing. But, unlike the Gnostics, in Clement's doctrines, there was a possibility for everyone who worked towards the true practice of contemplation and right living to progress and so to become a true gnostic and attain fulfillment.

**One can find in Clement's writings the assumption of a secret Apostolic tradition - an allegorical teaching, handed down, not through a succession of bishops but of teachers.** This again is exactly what Gnosticism teaches! Clement wrote that **"after the resurrection, the Lord delivered the Gnosis to James the Just and to John and Peter; they delivered it to the other apostles",** (from Eusebius' Church History 2, i.4). **There must exist, if this be so, an esoteric as well as an exoteric Christianity.**



This idea was more clearly expressed by Origen, who had listened as a boy to Clement's lectures. Origen, as well as being a committed and devout Christian and Christian traditionalist, was a philosopher who had studied the Gnostic systems and who clearly knew a great deal about the Gnostic schools that existed in his time. He held that man was striving towards a sorrowless condition - a state of order and of rest. According to Origen this condition of rest and completeness could be reached by intense practice of contemplation and by self-knowledge, which, for him, meant Divine Wisdom. "The soul is trained, as it were, to behold itself in a mirror. It shows the divine spirit, if it should be found worthy of such fellowship, as in a mirror, and this discovers traces of a secret path to participation in the divine nature."

But Origen accepted that complete and certain knowledge rests wholly on Divine Revelation. This means that he desired his cosmological speculations to be based on the sacred Scriptures, whose understanding had a special significance for him. In his teaching the facts recorded in the Old and New Testaments appear as vehicles of ideas, and their importance lies in this aspect. Unlike the Gnostics, Origen emphasized the empirical and historical in Scripture, as concrete facts. But for him their actuality did not give them their value; historical Christianity was the husk which enclosed the true kernel.

What was fundamental in Origen's exposition of Christianity was his insistence that scriptural ideas existed on three different levels - the "Flesh of Scripture" was the body of happenings in time and space, which was to edify the masses; the more advanced, the "pneumatics", could study the mysteries, the "Soul of Scripture"; only the "perfect" could understand the "Spirit of Scripture" - the level above mere history. Certain Christian teachings, he said, should not lightly be committed to writing; without the "key to knowledge" there would always be mistakes in the teaching of Scripture and Christian Tradition. Again we find these three designations applied to mankind and their understanding of things pertaining to the Spiritual dimension. Origen's view that the recorded facts of Christianity were of small value beside their secret inner meaning was difficult to reconcile with the rules of faith given to the congregations in the Roman churches. And it was on this point that Origen made clear his belief that there was both an esoteric and an exoteric Christianity as had his mentor Clement of Alexandria.

Although the Christian masses could not grasp the deeper meanings expounded in the Scriptures, the "flesh" of Scripture was necessary for their life and growth. Simple faith was enough for Salvation, and the Church had embodied the substance of Christian belief in its exoteric rules of faith. Anthropomorphic language was what could be generally understood, but Christ would have different meanings according to the believer's spiritual progress.

Now take a deep breath and ponder what is said next. The centre of Christianity for Origen was Christ; not as Man, but as Logos - the Logos who was with the Father from all eternity. Those who had striven to draw near to the Logos - men such as Socrates and Heracitus - were Christians before the coming of Christ.

Some Gnostics had incorporated Jesus into their cosmological scheme - Jesus for many Gnostics was the mythical Revealer, who came from above. His descent from Heaven, and his ascent back to Heaven were only to be understood allegorically and metaphors or symbols of the soul's destiny. Christ was the Archetypal Man. Origen had sympathy with the Gnostics' views, but he did not agree with them that all the facts stated in the Christian Revelation were purely symbols of the inner life. Christianity, he said, was a practical principle, unfolded in historically revealed facts. Nevertheless, he taught a cosmological and theological system that incorporated many ideas not found in the traditional Christian teaching of the time.

In Origen's system the first act by the Father of All Being was to create the realm of intelligences. Some of these spirits cooled in their love for their Creator and fell away. God made the material world as a means of recovering these spiritual beings who, through their own fault, were now imprisoned in human bodies.

Origen believed in a pre-mundane fall, as did the Gnostics, but, unlike the Gnostics, he believed that the Creator God was good and all-merciful, creating the world as a training-ground for human souls, which the fallen spirits had now become, so that they might return to the Fount of their Being. The "world", unlike the Gnostics' "world", was not evil - the suffering in it being necessary for the training and purification of the fallen souls. For him, evil's root was purposelessness - absence of good - and God did not punish. The punishment of human kind consisted in their turning away from where alone true happiness could be found. Their redemption consisted in being shown the way to find it again.

Depending on the quality of their life on earth, souls might evolve or degenerate. After further lives of striving, finally, all would eventually be saved. This last belief was contrary to that of the Gnostics, who assumed a pre-destined elect. Origen believed that every man has within him the image of the Divine Word. Unless he destroys this entirely, there is always hope for him. He believed in the possibility of attaining perfection after death. The soul's growth in comprehension would continue through a slow and painful ascent of many lives. As no one on this earth is sinless, there will be purging "fire" at death. This belief in the restitution of all souls back to purity and blessedness, through the means of suffering, contained within it the germ of the doctrine of Purgatory. And the idea of Purgatory became a general assumption in Church teaching from then on, though it was not formulated till Gregory the Great did so in the sixth century, and it was not included in official doctrine until the thirteenth. Yet the final restitution of all things was, in Origen's teaching, relative, since all spirits inherently possess free will and so could fall again. God remains eternally immutable, but the falling and the rising may continue. Origen did not conceive the End as an apocalyptic transfiguration of the world, but, as in Gnostic doctrine, a liberation of the spirit from its union with the sensual. His was a spiritual, not a physical resurrection.

Origen taught that the idea of three persons within the Godhead was fundamental to Christian understanding:

- The Father, unbegotten and immutable;
- The Holy Spirit, brought into being by the Father through Christ, the Word; and
- The Word, the Logos, the wisdom and power of God which is continually begotten by the Father.

The Logos is the wisdom and power of God, directing the Universe. So the Word is midway between the Uncreated God and created things. It is this Logos or Word which is a spiritual intermediary between Pure Spirit (God) and Matter (mankind). This is pure Gnosticism. But, though in the way in which he wrote the Son appeared subordinate to the Father, Origen held that the immutability, the pure knowledge and the blessedness of the Father were communicable attributes, and so the Son possessed complete Divinity.

Origen's teaching influenced many Christian thinkers, but some of his ideas were held to be heretical, and the Council of Alexandria in 400 and that of Constantinople in 543 condemned them. Strangely enough, Origen was not attacked for the general scheme of ideas that formed his system, though they might have been thought to be close to Gnosticism and to be a departure from mainstream Christianity; for example, what would appear contrary to the teaching of the Great Church was the distinction which he made between:

- The ordinary "pistis" (the piety of the "faithful") and
- The special spiritual "gnosis"

In reality Origen taught the existence of "two Christianities"; and indeed his whole conception of man's redemption - the fallen spirits returning through many lives to the source of their pure being - might have been expected to be equally unacceptable. Instead, he was attacked on isolated propositions, such as his conception of a spiritual as against a physical resurrection. His belief in the pre-existence of souls was said to be heretical, and his teaching on the restoration of all things back to God was attacked on the grounds that this must include even the devils. Above all, he was accused of heresy on account



of his exposition of the Logos and of the explanation which he gave of the Son's relationship to the Father. He was accused of making the Son subordinate and so detracting from His Divinity. **And yet, in the religious controversies concerning this relationship, both sides drew most of their ideas from him.**

**In the same way as Clement, Origen recognized what was of value in Gnostic teaching and developed it, though, strangely enough, much of what can now be learned of his ideas comes from his writings against what he held to be Gnostic errors. For both Clement and Origen, there existed a question that has never been answered - was there an authentic tradition, unknown to the ordinary Christian, on which the Gnostic writers relied" ?**

It is ironic that a great part of Origen's teaching should have been obscured by theological argument and controversy, because, for Origen, Christianity was essentially not a doctrine, but a life; not a Law, but a Spirit. He laid special emphasis on the importance of the Spirit as against the Letter in all Christian teaching. **And yet the creation of a permanent, institutional Church demanded the "Letter". Already, Irenaeus, the great second-century apologist, had begun to propound what the "Letter" entailed.**

**We will find that it will Irenaeus who will counter the Gnostic's allegorical First New Testament with a "literal" [of the letter] anti-Gnostic Catholic one in and around 180 C.E.** Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, lived between c. 130 and 202 AD. Up till that time the word "catholic" meant simply "worldwide". By the end of the second. century, it meant holding to doctrines of Apostolic Tradition as accepted by a universal federation of churches which recognized one another.

**Irenaeus' main concerns were to preserve what he held to be the Apostolic Tradition, and to ensure that every church agreed with the Roman Church as a matter of necessity; for, he said, this Church represented the leadership of faith.** "And to this Church, on account of its more powerful leadership, it is necessary for every church to gather; that is to say, the faithful from all quarters, because the tradition from the Apostles is preserved there by those who come from all quarters." (Adversus Heresies III 3 i).

Irenaeus' great work in five books was entitled Against Heresies. **The use of the word "heresy" in a work which received general acclaim shows that, already by the second century, there was a collection of belief that was considered to be "orthodox".**

**The main object of Irenaeus' attack was Gnosticism.** He considered, as did Hippolytus and Justin Martyr- also writing in the second century - that Simon Magus was the founder of Gnosticism; and they equated a Simon, (possibly a leader of a Samaritan sect that had spread to Syria, Phrygia and even to Rome) with the Simon of the Acts of the Apostles chapter 8. "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time, in the same city, used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one; to whom they gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying 'this man is the great power of God'." Hippolytus attributed a "gnostic" book called The Great Revelation to this Simon.

**As in all Gnostic sects, the "Simonians" held, as one of their central beliefs, that within humanity, or within some portion of humanity, a Divine Spark was imprisoned and this had to be redeemed.** Irenaeus maintained that Simon, the leader, announced himself as this Redeemer - the Supreme God, who had **descended** through the worlds **to appear as man (though not a man)** in order to set right that which had gone astray on earth. In this form the belief naturally appeared blasphemous to Irenaeus, **but he was also attacking the general Gnostic idea of a mythical Saviour (using "myth" in its sense of a philosophic abstraction or cosmic explanation); and he opposed this Docetic interpretation of Christ - that is Christ as purely a spirit-being. An essential element in Irenaeus' teaching and in what became "mainstream" or "orthodox" Christianity was the belief that Jesus Christ lived on earth as a human being in historical time.** Irenaeus held that only in this way could Christ recapitulate perfection step by step, thereby showing that mankind had the possibility of a return to the immortality lost by Adam's fall. God created man in His image to live in a world created for his use and for his training.

It was the speculative, subjective and unhistorical approach of the Gnostics that Irenaeus found dangerous - especially because it could lead, and in fact did lead, to a proliferation of schools and of "gospels". It was a single teaching, handed down from the Apostles and their successors which Irenaeus was concerned to establish and preserve. As a boy he had listened to St Polycarp; and St Polycarp had been a disciple of St John. He felt, therefore, that he could personally witness to a continuity of teaching.

Irenaeus maintained that there was an oral tradition given by the Apostles to the Elders and, from them, to the bishops whom they appointed, and so on to their successors. The four Gospels were the written records of this teaching in four forms. Matthew, he thought, was the first to write. But it was not the Gospels that Irenaeus held to be the primary authority, but the voice of the succession of Elders; and the original *kerygma*, or oral teaching, which was later written down in the Gospels, had been possessed by the Apostles in its entirety. Irenaeus insisted that if they had known of hidden mysteries, they would have told their successors.

Questions had arisen and different interpretations had been given from the very beginning of the new religion. Irenaeus does not enter into this, but writes in order to show that a teaching had continued without a break, and that its reliability was guaranteed by an unbroken succession of authority. To prove this, he traced a continuous line of Bishops of Rome back to St Peter, himself the first Bishop of Rome. Irenaeus gave the Bishops of Rome as the example of a continuous succession of authority, because he held Rome to be the preeminent and leading church. He believed this to be so because tradition held that the Roman church was founded by St Peter and St Paul, both martyred in Rome. And because, as he said, "*all roads lead to Rome*", it was possible for interpretations of Christian teachings to be checked there in the one centre, and the true character of the universal faith could thus be clarified.

The Gnostics, too, put their faith in an oral tradition, but they maintained that it was a secret one, given only to those who could understand; and they suggested that the apostles themselves often did not understand it. Even in the next generation, they said, the purity of the teaching was no longer perfect. Hints of a "secret teaching" often appeared in their allegorization of the Gospels - their mystical interpretation of the events recorded there. And it was against such allegorization that Irenaeus wrote most strongly. His main method was to hold fast to the "canon of truth received at baptism". This was the "baptismal creed" - at first, not so much a creed as a series of answers given by the Christian believer, on entering into his new life. What came to be called "The Apostles' Creed" - the oldest confession of faith - appears to have been formulated around the year 150 AD, and probably originated in Rome. The beliefs stated in the "Apostle's Creed" it seem to have been carefully defined in order to counteract Gnosticism.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED.....REFUTING GNOSTICISM

- The Gnostics denied a Divine act of Creation. So, in the Creed, there is the statement, "I believe in one God, who *made* heaven and earth."
- Against the Docetic conception of Christ, is the stated belief, "Christ Jesus, Son of God, was made flesh for our Salvation."
- To counteract the mystical, subjective tendencies of the Gnostics, there was the affirmation that Christ suffered and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, thus declaring the Saviour to be a person who lived on earth in historical time.
- And to exclude the belief in the evil of matter, and so in a purely spiritual Resurrection, Catechumens answered that they believed in the Resurrection of the Body, and that Christ would come to judge the living and the dead.

It is possible that, had the "orthodox" Church not felt the need to defend Christian teaching from Gnosticism, the Creed would not have been formulated in that particular way.

Irenaeus summed up his attack on the Gnostics by his affirmation that Scripture - the Scripture then



**accepted by the Great Church and soon to be almost identical with the present New Testament - together with Apostolic Tradition, constituted the faith by which Christians live.**

As can be seen from contemporary and later history, Irenaeus' proofs of a single, guaranteed, unbroken tradition were not irrefutable. But for many they seemed so, and they gave yet greater strength to the ever increasing importance of the central teaching-authority at Rome.

**This central authority was forming its Canon of Scripture and beginning to formulate its Creed.**

Whether these could be understood and acted upon by every type of believer did not present itself as a problem to the first leaders of the Great Church. But it was a problem in the view of some thinkers, and was to appear as a problem running through most of the Christian heresies of the first three centuries.

## **CONCLUSION**

I hope you noticed that as late as 250 C.E. that Gnostic understanding of Christianity and "the Christ" yet lived and was prospering as seen in these early and very prominent Christian teaches. They understood what we don't; namely, that there are levels of understanding of God, the soul, and His "Christ." Some of the greatest minds ever given to mankind adopted and supported many Gnostic religious beliefs and many of these were respected early Church leaders like Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Rome will pronounce such ones later as "heretics." Others and their writings and importance will be brushed under the rug. Literalistic Rome will not accept this deeper understanding of God and His "Christ" as taught by the earliest Christians; both Jewish and non-Jewish. Gnosticism will become the great enemy of the Roman Church and it had to be eradicated.

Already at work since 180 C.E. is the Roman printing press which, in accordance with its own Church Councils, was active in suppressing Gnosticism and Gnostic concepts through not only the production of new "Apostolic Revelation" in the names of Apostles and Paul but the destruction and censoring of those who advocated them as well as their Gnostic writings. The light of this ancient truth is beginning to be extinguished by the diligent efforts of Rome. The anti-Gnostic Second New Testament will be Rome's answer to the Gnostic problem as well as their Gnostic apologists such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus as well as a host of others which Rome will send.



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## MARCION & MARCIONITES

Throughout the second century, while some Christian communities were forming themselves into churches and combining to become part of the Great Roman Church, others were following leaders of diverging views and beliefs.

Already in Paul's time, Christian converts were forming sects, each taking the name of a special teacher:

*"...everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (I Cor 1:12).*

In post-apostolic times the divergences were growing still greater; indeed in some regions it may have been difficult to determine who were the rightful descendants of the first Christian teachers.

One of these divergent groups was that of the **Marcionites**. **Most of what is known about their beliefs comes from the writings of Irenaeus**, who attacked them in his book Adversus Haereses.

**The Marcionites, unlike the Gnostics, formed a Church. This they claimed to be universal, based on the authentic institution of Christ.** Marcionite numbers grew rapidly, until in some regions, it seemed that they would outnumber the Great Church. Irenaeus wrote against what appeared to him to be as great a danger to the unity of Christianity as was the teaching of the Valentiman Gnostics. The Marcionites are often depicted as a Gnostic sect and many of their religious tenets were the same. Yet they differed in other respects as we shall see. **The aim of Gnosticism was to teach those, who could be taught, the true knowledge that would restore them to their origin. Christianity was One of the ways to do this but not the only way. The Marcionites considered themselves to be the only true Christians, and their aim was to preach pure Christianity, which alone could bring salvation.** They aimed at a simple, **ascetic form of Christianity** - a reaction against the speculative and "mystical" ideas that seemed to them to be spreading everywhere.

**Marcion lived between C. 130 and 180 AD.** The system he taught incorporated some of the Gnostic doctrines which he had studied. **Marcion accepted the Gnostic principle of Dualism:**

Matter was hostile to the Good. This meant that the Creator-God, the "Demiurge", was limited and evil; and his material creation was therefore evil. We saw these ideas typical of Gnosticism previously in past Gnostic articles. According to Marcion's system, man was the creation of this stern and wrathful God, who gave him a Law which was impossible to keep, so that he lay under a curse. The Higher God of Goodness - the First Principle - took pity on man and sent his Son to rescue him. This manifestation of the Supreme God was clothed in the phantom body (no flesh/not human) of a man of thirty-three years of age, whom the "Demiurge" caused to be crucified. **To Marcion and his followers who were following gnostic ideas, this was a Docetic Christ, a purely spiritual being, not subject to the birth and death of an ordinary man.** The Risen Christ charged the "Demiurge" with acting against his own Law. And so, to make amends, the "Demiurge" had to deliver to the "Good God" the souls of the redeemed who had died. To draw the living to Himself the "Good



**God" raised up Paul, who alone was the only one who understood the message of "the Christ" and the doctrine of the God of Love and the God of Law.**

**Marcion held that Paul alone knew and kept the true traditions of Christ. Marcion shared this belief, with many of the Gnostic schools, who regarded St Paul as their founder. Paul had drawn an antithesis between the servitude of the Law and the freedom of grace, and this was interpreted by Marcion as in opposition between the justice of the God of the Old Testament, (identified with the "Demiurge"), and the love of the Good and Supreme God.**

**It may be premature to get into this at this time but understand that Marcion despised Jews. His advocacy of Paul as the only one who truly understood the message of "the Christ" is all the more surprising given this fact unless what the Ebionites write of Paul is correct; namely, that Paul was himself a Gentile who later converted to Judaism! Coupled with this is the fact that Marcion, a Gnostic to the core, would select Paul to express his religious ideas; strange you should think unless Paul's "gospel" was understood and interpreted in their day as being a treatise upon Gnosticism.**

**At this time the "Great Church", comprising those churches which accepted the leadership of Rome and a common Apostolic tradition, was still without a completely fixed canon of scripture, though it, like Marcion was familiar with the Oral Traditions and the few extant epistles of Paul and gospel fragments that existed in their day. As had been done from the very first days, the Christian communities also read extracts from the Law and the Prophets.**

**Marcion, a Gnostic, will be the first to collect and develop a fixed canon of scripture. For purposes of clarity I will call this the First New Testament. In Marcion's Church, the Gospel of Truth was read, Paul's epistles (excluding the Pastoral letters), and, what was to become later the Gospel of Luke. Much of what is accepted today as the Pauline epistles were, in Marcion's collection of them, lacking huge parts indicating that later writing and additions to the Pauline epistles will be accomplished by the Holy Roman Forgery Mill. The fact that the first mention and quote by a Christian writer from either the Gospel of Mark, Matthew, Luke, or John cannot be found before 180 C.E. should speak loud to us about the late date for the Four Canonical Gospels that are touted by Roman tradition today to have been written "early." In I Corinthians 11:23-26, Paul was shown to have received an account of the Last Supper "from the Lord". The account most similar to this is found in Luke's Gospel, which convinced Marcion that what would later be called Luke's Gospel was written by originally by Paul.**

**The main purpose in the Marcionites' collection of scripture was to emphasise the love and forgiveness of God which they considered best reflected Luke's Gospel. They held that the Old Testament scriptures, which were read in the "Catholic" churches, were opposed to the teaching of mercy, which was for them the hallmark of true Christianity. Anything which they found in fragments of what would later be called Luke's Gospel or in Paul's letters which was at variance with their conception of Christian teaching they attributed to falsifications introduced by Judaisers and by those who opposed Paul and his Gnostic thought.**

**Marcion believed that God had raised him up to preach again the true Gospel and to bring the Church back to an understanding of Paul's teaching. Man must put his trust in the "Good God" and renounce the "Demiurge". This renunciation of the "God of Matter" led to rejection of everything sensual and so to a strict asceticism. The Marcionites, like the Gnostics, made a division between the "Perfect" and the other believers. For them, the "Perfect" were those who were baptized and who thenceforth had to remain celibate. In speaking of marriage and sexual relations Paul would advocate Gnostic celibacy:**

***1 Cor 7:6-7 commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself (celibate). But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. (KJV)***

Yet this was not imposed upon people forceably; ordinary believers could live a normal married life and were only baptized at the time of their death. This Marcionite doctrine was to reappear in later mediaeval heresies, where similar distinctions were made between grades of adherents. We saw this previously.

It was not only their belief in the hostility of Matter and therefore in the necessary rejection of all sensual indulgence that gave rise to these hierarchies; there was also, as in many heresies, the sense that the demands of Christianity were so enormous that they were far above what the mass of people could attain. The Marcionites used their hierarchical system as a solution to this problem, in the same way as other Gnostics had done.

**In seeming contradiction to the strictness of their hierarchical rules, the Marcionite Church insisted that only faith in God's love was needed for salvation, humanity having been freed from the legislation of the Old Testament God. This emphasis on a loving, merciful God, rather than on a God of wrath and justice, was what attracted increasing numbers of converts into their community.**

Marcionite communities spread rapidly, especially in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, and there were Marcionite churches there throughout the second century and at the beginning of the third. But by the end of the third century Marcionism had either died out or had been engulfed by other sects such as the Manichaeans.

**Though some Marcionite doctrines were to have an influence on Christian teachings of later times, it is primarily the great numbers of the Marcionites and the size of their Church that makes the Marcionite heresy important; indeed, in the second century it might have appeared uncertain which would become the continuing Church of Christianity, the Great Church or the Marcionite.**

And yet, looking back through history, the Marcionite system is seen to be full of illogicalities and oversimplifications. Its many illogicalities caused its churches to split into factions. Tertullian, writing a few decades after Irenaeus, said:

"Marcionites make churches as wasps make nests" (Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*). Proliferation and division may well be the distinguishing marks of what constitutes a heresy.

Although Christianity was still an unauthorised sect in the Roman Empire and subject to periodic persecutions, nevertheless, by this time - the end of the second century - the numbers of Christians were growing dramatically thanks to the efforts of Marcion and his emphasis upon a God of love. Rome and their brand of Christianity felt threatened by not only Marcion's successes but the impact of his First New Testament which provided an example in canon form of a Heavenly authority for his doctrines. The Jews had their Torah and Marcion and the earliest Christians had their First New Testament that espoused the teachings of "the Christ" among men. Rome knew it had to act and act quickly. Their solution was to give the world a Second New Testament through forgery and persecute out of existence these earliest Christians.

When Marcion lived, there was as yet no organisation which could claim general acceptance as the Catholic Church, divinely instituted; and no fixed Catholic Canon of New Testament Scripture. Christianity was still in a fluid state. Irenaeus' great work against heresies had not yet been written. There appeared then to be merely disagreement between those holding different interpretations and beliefs, rather than a clear line between "orthodox" and "heretic". So that, in Marcion's time, it was not difficult for separated groups of Christians to live in accordance with their own particular views of strict Christian behaviour, and worship as they thought fit.

By the turn of the second century however, the Great Church was already an institution for administration and for teaching. **Rome was putting the power of the State behind religion and that means in officially they were not designating that some writings were considered canonical and some were not.** The beliefs and practices of the Marcionites were then held by official Roman Catholicism to be heretical, their religious tenants condemned by Roman. Over time an institutional Church with a formulated body of dogmatic teaching was out of necessity brought into being. Ironically it was Marcion's own existence and actions that helped to create it. As was the case with other great heresies, in trying to combat them Church leaders were forced to articulate their beliefs in clear-cut doctrines. And to end the danger of divisions which could destroy a unified



Church these doctrines were issued in the form of dogma, that is to say, as doctrines, the belief in which is binding. These "official doctrines" were incorporated into pages of the First New Testament in such a way that its mythical and allegorical interpretation of "the Christ" was but for all intentions lost. Gospels were written and added to in the names of Jewish Apostles which reflected not historical Jewish beliefs concerning the Jewish Messiah but Rome's literalization of a previous "allegorical" concept of God and His Christ. Coupled with this is the result of such Roman "literalization": namely, the creation of a literal incarnated SunGodman in the form of a Jewish Rabbi named Jesus. Pauline epistles were invented (the Pastoral Epistles) and great pains were taken to make the "allegorical Christ" a historical person. Genealogies were added to existing gospels both in Luke and Matthew and antinomian passages were created entirely like Galatians chapter 3 and Roman chapters 9-11 to express Roman theology in the name of Paul. Since the power of the State now was behind Roman Christianity there was no limit to the deceptions foisted upon mankind in the name of official Roman dogma.

By the time the third century opened, there was already an established collection of "orthodox" beliefs, binding on those who considered themselves part of the Catholic Church; "catholic" was now synonymous with 'orthodox' Christianity. The Apostles' Creed had been formulated as we have seen to combat the earliest Gnostic Christians, and adherence to it was obligatory.

**Answer for yourself:** In view of all that took place in the first two centuries, how much was the establishment of doctrine and institution merely the result of reaction to circumstance and to the words and deeds of others?

**Answer for yourself:** Was it a necessary development inherent in the very religion itself? If it was, did this development lead to new insights and understanding, and so to true growth?

**Answer for yourself:** Or did strict formulation lead to distortion?

**Answer for yourself:** Was St Hilary, Gallic bishop of the fourth century, right when he said, "The error of others compels US to err in daring to embody, in human terms, truths which ought to be hidden in the silent veneration of the heart." (Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.11.7).

**Answer for yourself:** Even granting some inevitable distortion, was this a necessary price to pay for the continuation of a world-religion, which would otherwise have evaporated into a collection of divergent sects?

**Answer for yourself:** Was logical definition essential to an institutional Church, which alone could give the Christian religion continuity?

An institutional Church, inheriting much that was practically useful from the law and administration of the Roman Empire, was, in their eyes of many, something wholly different from the early Church, established by the earliest Christians and true follower of "the Christ."



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## MANICHAEISM...MARCIONITES REBORN

At the beginning of the third century the church at Rome was generally regarded as the centre from whence accepted interpretations of doctrine and forms of teaching should be given to the daughter-churches. This was how Irenaeus had envisaged it and who had gone to great lengths to assure it by crafting the Second New Testament in refutation of Marcion and his First New Testament. But it was not until the express formulation of Pope Leo I in the fifth century that the Pope's authority was said to rest on the papal succession from St Peter. Irenaeus had already stressed the importance of this doctrine, but it had not yet been authoritatively stated.

In the centuries before Leo I in the fifth century there were many controversies concerning Christian theology that Rome had to face regarding their understanding of "Christology" and these had their effect on subsequent Church history. They were also interwoven with the establishment of Christianity as the Empire's official religion. Rome will meet the challenge of Gnosticism head on and over time will conquer it through the production of an official Roman document which would give official and authoritative status to their religious doctrines concerning "the Christ." It becomes the Second New Testament.

The theological controversies that would challenge Rome began early; as early as the second century. We have up to now only touched on Marcion and will quite soon delve into this Marcion problem in depth but I need to mention another great challenge to Roman Catholicism and their interpretation of "the Christ" and this is Manichaeism. Manichaeism is very important to our study because it is not only closely connected with Gnosticism but provided for searchers after truth an ethical religious system of thought whereby they could live.

Manichaeism is not a "heresy" in the strict meaning of the term, since the Manichees did not consider themselves to be Christians; but in a sense, they were part of the Church. Theirs was a type of secret society.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this not the same idea that we have seen from the beginning with all the variations of Gnosticism up to now? It sure is.

Their aim was to find the inner connection between all religions, so they were allowed, by their own rules, to adopt the language of the religion prevailing where they lived and outwardly to conform to it.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it not remotely possible that the devotees of Manichaeism understood that within all religions since the beginning of time runs a kernel of truth that connects them all?

It is said that Mani, the founder, professed to have blended Christian teachings with those of the Persian Magi. His was to be the new and perfect religion. Yet even considered as a separate religion, Manichaeism must be included here, because of its connection with and influence on Christian doctrines, both "orthodox" and "heretical", and because of the effect it had on Christians contemporary with it and on their descendants of later ages.



Mani was born in Persia about 215 AD, and was said to come from a well-to-do Persian family. About the year 280, he moved into the eastern provinces of the Graeco-Roman Empire to teach and spread his religious ideas. He had studied Persian Magism, had been to India and had heard a little about Buddhism. It seems that he had learned about Christianity from Basilidean Gnostic sects and through the Marcionite Churches. Most of what is known about Manichaeism comes from fourth-century Roman documents and from Moslem historians of the tenth century. There were many Manichaean writings known to the Moslems which are now lost; many were destroyed by the Christian bishops.

Mani's system and mythology were based on a dualistic conception of the Universe in accordance with the Zoroastrian teaching of the Persian Magi as well as typical Gnostic beliefs that we have seen before. The world is clearly full of terrifying contradictions, and, for the Manichees, the only possible explanation for this lies in the existence of two separate cosmic kingdoms - the one of Light, the other of Darkness. In the Manichaean system, the physical and the ethical are not distinguished one from the other. Light and Goodness are the same, as are Evil and Darkness. There are two Rulers in the Universe. The Kingdom of Light is ruled by the good Primal God. The Kingdom of Darkness is another spiritual Kingdom, and Satan and the demons are born from it. The two Kingdoms are opposed for all eternity.

According to the Manichaean myth, Satan invaded the Kingdom of Light. To fight against him, God created Primal Man, who was, for the Manichees, an Archetype-an original ideal pattern, not the first human being. Satan overcame his opponent and, although Primal Man was rescued by God, Satan robbed him of some particles of light and mingled these with five elements of the dark world. Out of these mixed elements God formed the visible world in order to deliver the imprisoned light. Primal Man and his helping spirits dwell in the Sun, and the twelve constellations collect any particles of light set free and pour them into the Sun. Here they are purified and can attain to God.

The first man of human kind, Adam, was engendered by Satan in conjunction with "sin". But Satan drove into him the particles of stolen light so as to be able to dominate these sparks more securely. Eve was created to be Adam's companion; she also had a spark of light within her, although a smaller one. The heavenly spirits took the human beings under their care and sent aeons (spiritual powers) to help them. These took the visible forms of prophets. As in the Gnostic systems, their purpose in coming was to instruct humanity as to its true nature.

In the Manichaean system, these prophets were sometimes named Adam, Noah, Abraham, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Paul. Mani was the last and the greatest. They could only save Man and set free the Light within by imparting true gnosis of his nature and his forces. The light set free would ascend to God. If man is not redeemed in his life-time, then he must go through further cycles of life after death to purify himself. When all light is united with God, the angels will withdraw from the world; a huge conflagration will destroy the material Universe, and again there will be, as at first, complete separation of the two Spiritual Kingdoms.

Based on what we have seen up to now in our study the Manichaean conception of Christianity seems to have been influenced by Marcionite teaching, in its antagonism to the Old Testament and to the "Old Testament God". The Docetic Christ of the Manichees is similar to the Marcionite- "a divine being clothed in the semblance of Man". This Docetism also connects the Manichees with Gnosticism; and the kernel of the Manichaean belief is close to the gnostic tenet that there is within mankind that which must be freed in order to return to its Giver.

**Answer for yourself:** How did Manichaeism differ from Marcionism? In the Manichaean system, it was only through Mani, who was continuing the work of the helpers from Heaven, that the separation of Light from Darkness could be completed - only through him and his imitators, "the elect".

Again, as in the Gnostic systems, there were different grades among believers. All were not of the same stature, nor had they the same obligations imposed upon them. In the Manichaean system, the emphasis seems

to have been on what was required of the higher grades, but no one was in the category of the hopeless. The lowest grades had a hope of reincarnation, and, in a new cycle of life, could look for liberation.

There were five grades of Manichees. The first three included the teachers, or 'Sons of Meekness'. They were called the *Perfecti*, or the *Electi*. Then came the Administrators, the "Sons of Knowledge or Discernment" enlightened by the Sun, who were the bishops and priests. The last grade consisted of the Elders, the "Sons of Understanding or Intelligence", who were the presbyters. The Administrators and the Elders together were called the *Auditori* - the Hearers. The teachers or "Sons of Meekness" were Mani himself and his successors.

**The dualism of the Manichees and their belief in Matter as the prison of light gave rise to a strict asceticism in their rules of conduct as we have seen in most of the Gnostics. They could not eat flesh, and shunned marriage and procreation was condemned, since with the engendering of souls in more bodies as prisons for the Spirit then yet more particles of light would be imprisoned. If not shunned then the hopeless of the human condition would only continue.**

But it was only the *Electi* who obeyed these and other obligations and it was only they who could be called Mathchees in the strict sense. The *Auditori* had fewer demands made upon them. They were enjoined to abstain from lying, adultery, murder, doubt and slackness, and to keep a certain number of fasts. Otherwise they could live an easier life. The *Auditori* had to treat the *Perfecti* with the greatest respect, almost amounting to worship, for the *Perfecti* were redeemers. Only they had full knowledge of religious truths and alone could intercede for others.

Manichaeism spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire and far into Asia. **By the beginning of the fourth century, the large number of its members made it appear as one of the great religions claiming adherence. There was a single head over the five grades of believers - the Manichaeian Pope; and for many centuries there was a Manichaeian Pope in Babylon.**

**The Marcionites were numerous among the converts to Manichaeism; for much of its teaching was akin to their own and was probably originally taken from it. By the end of the third century most of the surviving Marcionite churches were incorporated into the Manichaeian community.**

Manichaeism won especially large numbers of followers from the cultured and intellectual circles in the Graeco-Roman Empire. It seemed to provide an intelligent philosophy and a repudiation of the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament Scriptures. In Rome and in North Africa, many people, especially among the scholars and teachers, turned to Manichaeism. **The most famous convert to Manichaeism was St Augustine, who, for nine years, was one of the *Auditori*.**

St Augustine had been taught about Christianity as a child, but had never become a Christian, nor pursued Christian ideas as a young man and a student. When Augustine first met the Manichaeian system he felt that these ideas gave him an explanation of the meaning of the world and of the purpose of his existence. But later he became dissatisfied with the explanations given in the Manichaeian cosmic myth. It seemed to him that the conception of rival worlds of Light and Darkness and of the war between them only pushed the question of Good and Evil one stage further back and answered nothing. **Augustine could not see how an all-perfect God could be attacked and invaded by a Spirit of Darkness.**

When St Augustine became a Christian his devotion to, and subsequent rejection of Manichaeism had some influence on the way he expounded Christian doctrine. **Fundamental to his teaching was the universal, all-embracing power of God the Creator, and the powerlessness and sinfulness of human beings whose evil lay within, not in the world without; men and women could not blame an external power for their own errors and wrongdoing.**

The invasion of North Africa by the Vandals in the fifth century saw the end of Manichaeism there, but Manichaeian communities continued to exist in the Byzantine Empire in the East, and many settled in Bulgaria



and Armenia. In the fifth century Paulicians and Bogomils of those regions, who were thought of as heretical Christians, were these same Manichaean sects under other names. They too had their *Perfecti* and their *Auditori*, they believed in a Docetic Christ and in the evil of Matter. The eleventh-century Crusaders found Paulician sects in Syria and Palestine, and there were still Bogomils in Russia in the nineteenth century.

The Byzantine Emperors issued edicts condemning Manichees to death. From the end of the fifth century Manichaeism could be said to have "gone underground" until it reappeared among the Cathars in southern France and Spain in the eleventh century. This resurgence was probably encouraged by the Paulicians and Bogomils of the East, whose ideas were brought into the West along the East-West trade routes. The Church theologians of that time described all such heretics as Manichees.

The Cathars had the same affinity with Gnostic Christianity as had the Manichees, and much of their philosophy and doctrine was Manichaean. Men were created as a result of a war in heaven, for Satan - or sometimes the evil God of the Old Testament - had imprisoned heavenly spirits in terrestrial bodies. The Cathars certainly considered themselves Christians, but they believed in two Eternal Powers - the Good God and the Evil Creator or the Prince of Darkness. Matter was held to be hostile to the Good, and this conception, of the eternal antagonism between Matter and Spirit, resulted in belief in a Docetic Christ; for a Holy Christ could not assume flesh. Hostility to Matter, and therefore to the flesh, led to an imposition of rules of strict ascetism, too difficult for the ordinary believer to follow. The Cathars, therefore, accepted a hierarchy of believers in similar fashion to the Manichees.

This hierarchy of believers was extremely important in Catharism. The system was based on the distinction between a pure elite (the *perfecti* or *boni homines*) and the ordinary mass of believers (the *credenti*). The *perfecti* were initiated by receiving the sacrament called the *consolamentum*, (the consolation), which the Cathars referred to as "heretication". Once hereticated the *bonhomme* had to accept many disciplines - an austere manner of living, strict dietary rules and permanent celibacy - so that only those seriously seeking perfection would receive the *consolamentum* while still in active life. The ordinary *credentes* received it only when death was near. The *perfecti* had the power to give blessings and to intercede for the believers, and were venerated and even worshipped by them.

The Cathars' dualism led them to believe that material objects could have no connection with Spirit. So they totally rejected all Catholic sacraments and aids to worship. The use of water in baptism they thought to be wrong. Their *consolamentum* was given through "a book and through words", that is, by the laying on of hands, and by the placing of the Gospel on the head. The Cross was on no account to be venerated, as it was made of wood, and, in any case, Christ had not suffered upon it since being a Docetic Christ (non-flesh phantom in human form...theophany). The use of bread and wine in the Eucharist was condemned by them.

The Cathars, like the Gnostics, concentrated on the use of allegory within Christian doctrine. For them there was no resurrection of the flesh but only the resurrection of one's soul when awakened to the knowledge that it was the very essence of God trapped in flesh which was to return to God at death. They held that true resurrection lay in the spiritual baptism bequeathed by Christ to the *boni homines* by providing such saving knowledge by Divine Revelation. Death brought no liberation, unless man became a new creature - a vehicle of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit - in the same way as Christ. This world was the only true Purgatory and Hell, as it was the antithesis of the eternal world of Christ's Peace. Also, for the Cathars as for the Manichees the Crucifixion was symbolic, because the account of the suffering of Jesus was held to be the symbolic account of the universal soul diffused through nature and suffering from its association with Matter.

The whole movement was directed against the Catholic Church, because the Cathars, or

**Albigensians as they were also called, believed that the Great Church had departed from the original true teaching about Christ and his revelation and had become immersed in materialism.** They held the sacerdotal system - the institution of the priesthood - to be wicked and wrong, because only the *boni homines*, the "Good Men", could lead believers through purification to salvation.

Measures taken to combat the Cathar, or Albigensian, heresy had their repercussions in Church history. **The need to compete with the powerful influence of the Cathar *boni homines* was probably a factor in making absolute the Rule of Celibacy for the clergy. But it was the action which the Church took to stamp out these heresies that had the most far-reaching effects. This action included the establishment of the Inquisition. The crime of high treason against God (not believing as other who set as judges upon you) was now specifically equated with high treason against the State, and this was to be the law in Europe for many centuries. Both crimes were punishable by death and, in both cases, torture was held to be allowable for the extortion of confessions.** The Pope, in the third Lateran Council, also proclaimed a **Crusade against the Albigensian heretics.** The King of France and the French nobles of the North seized this opportunity to show their loyalty to the Church and, at the same time, to carry out their policy of subduing the South, the land of the heretics. This they did with extraordinary cruelty.

**The Cathar sects existed much later than the fifth century, but they are clearly descended from the Manichees and, through them, from the Gnostics and Marcionites, whose ideas were thus carried on through the ages. Even the Knights Templar in the fourteenth century were accused of Manichaeism.**

**With the suppression of the Albigensians and Cathars in the fourteenth century, Manichaeism, as a religion or begetter of heretical sects, finally vanished, but its major tenet has not. Their doctrines and beliefs remain on the pages of our New Testaments undetected by most because of our failure to understand concepts that were only intended by the original writers to be understood "allegorically" and not "literally."** There remains the perennial problem of Good and Evil in the Universe. The simplistic Manichaean solution - the opposing Kingdoms of Light and Darkness - is still the belief of many, although they may not, perhaps, consciously realise it. It is certainly not 'orthodox' Christian doctrine. But the status and dominion of the Prince of Darkness has never been satisfactorily defined.

The suppression of the Albigensians and Cathars, and the Inquisition that developed out of that suppression, are examples of the distortions which Christianity - called the "Religion of Resplendent Love" - **is just one of many actions by Roman Catholicism to obscure and eradicate the earliest understandings of God and His "Christ" as both understood and handed down by the Ancients. When the burning of parchments and books would no longer suffice for Rome in its destruction of religious truth then they started burning people. It is estimated by some that throughout the Dark Ages that Rome murdered over eighteen million "believers" because they did not "believe" exactly as Rome wanted them to.**

**"Allegorical" truths are today presented and taught as "literal" history by Rome and sadly are a pack of lies that betrays what the Ancients and even the Jews understood about "the Christ" let alone the Jewish Messiah.** Our websites already have devoted great amount of information to revealing this problem concerning the Jewish Messiah and the "literalization" of Sun Worship by Rome. Now we must deal with the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ."

This whole thing today is a complex mess that takes the average seeker of truth years to sift through and departmentalize in order to see the true picture. I ought to know because I speak from experience. To make matters worse the religious documents given to us by these Roman forgers guarantee that truth is obscured to those looking deeper into such things.

## **CONCLUSION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS WEBSITE**



This has been a short introduction into the various religious concepts and beliefs that the Ancients held concerning God and His "Christ" since the beginning of time. Imagine my startlement when finsihing years of intense and arduous study (over ten at that time) when I found that going backward throught time in my search for the Jewish Roots of Christainity (working from the Middle Ages backwards ultimaely to Egypt and the beginning of time) that I stumbled onto this fact: namely that the earliest understanding of God and His "emanations" from the realm of Pure Spirit into matter had been described in detail by Egyptian religion and handed down to the world for their enlightenment. Sadly I began to see that this understanding was altered by many; the least of which is Rome. The power of the Roman State made sure there were no successors to this forgery. And today we inherit the Roman doctrine on the pages of our New Testametns and we read it as if "Divine Truth" never suspecting that it has totally misrepresented "the Christ" and a Jewish Rabbi named Yeshua.

Now familar with these Gnostic concepts our task before us is somewhat easier.

We must get familar with the First New Testament and its later alteration entitled for simplicity the Second New Testament of Roman Catholicism.

- We must look deeper into Marcion and his theology as expressed in the First New Testament and make deatiled analysis of just what comprised it when it was first collected in 140 C.E.
- We need to pay very close attention as to which epistles were included in the original First News Testament of Marcion as from the hand of Paul and compare them with the later rendtion of them by Irenaeus and make special note of the "additions" to them as well as the creation of others and decide just how they surfaced some 40 yrs after Marcion's First New Testament. Marcion being rich would have spared no expense to collect these letters if they had existed in his day.
- This investigation will be all the more problematic when we see in these later epistles "supposed" from the hand and pen of Paul the outright anti-Gnostic flavor of these later epistles in contrast as I will show you the very "allegorical Gnostic" flavor of the first Pauline writings
- The Gospels are not immune to this problem either as we will see the "fish" story get longer and again see a concerted attempt to transform the "allegorical Christ" of the First New Testament into a "Literal Christ" by Rome through the substituton of a Second New Testament to replace the First one.
- Comparisons of the Gospel of Marcion with later Gospels will reveal this to you as we see the "human genealogies" materialize out of thin air. This is problematic since not being in the First New Testament of Marcion.
- And there is a lot more that can be said which will be shortly.

There is much more I could say but let us end now and begin a serious look into the man Marcion and his theology as expressed in the Pauline epistles as they existed in 140-150 C.E. before Rome will change them.

Blessings..Craig Lyons M.Div.



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## THE EGYPTIAN LOGOS..."THE WORD"

In ancient Egypt, language and numerology were just two sides of the same coin. Both were based upon profound and precise knowledge of the mysteries of Creation. Let us first look at language; in particular the "Word."

### HARMONY, SOUND, AND FORM THROUGH WORD

Egyptian creation texts repeatedly stress the belief of creation by the Word. As stated earlier, when nothing existed except the First Cause, He created the universe with His commanding voice. In effect, He contained the potential existence of all things, and when He spoke, He and all things with him came into objective existence. The Egyptian Book of the Coming Forth by Day (wrongly and commonly translated as the Book of the Dead), the oldest written text in the world, we read:

*I am the Eternal ... I am that which created the Word ...I am theWord ...*

In ancient Egypt, the words of Ptah, revealed through Tehuti-Thoth (the Egyptian Scribe, equivalent to Hermes, or Mercury), became the things and creatures of this world, i.e. the words (meaning sound waves) of the Creator created the elements of the universe.

The word (any word) is scientifically a vibrational complex element, which is a wave phenomenon, characterized by movement of variable frequency and intensity, between oppositely charged poles.

There are various types of sound waves. We know that infrasound waves can't be detected by our ears, but they can shake buildings and destroy body organs. Also, the ultrasound waves cannot be detected by our ears, but doctors use this power, as a kind of knifeless scalpel in microsurgery. We also know that a soprano singer can shatter glass with her voice.

Modern science has confirmed a direct relationship between wave frequency and form. Patterns and shapes of some materials occur only at specific frequencies. It is also a common knowledge that talking to plants (sound waves), causes them to grow (change in form).

The relationship between form, matter and sound can literally be heard at the Karnak temple, where the top portion of an obelisk is lying on the ground. If one hits the obelisk with his hand, the entire enormous block resonates like a tuning fork, which can be detected by putting one's ear at the angle of the top pyramidion. This phenomenon is certainly an instinctive property of granite, when cut to an obelisk shape, confirming the relationship between form and sound.

So with this understanding we should not realize that when God created with the "Word" a truer understanding would be He created with Sound Waves which comprised these Words.

### EGYPT AND HIEROGLYPHICS



The ancient Egyptians expressed their ideas in writing, more than seven thousand years ago, by means of a large number of picture signs, which are commonly called hieroglyphs. The word "hieroglyph" has its origin in Greek, and means "holy script." Important to note is that all the signs of hieroglyphs are images from the **Egyptian natural world, and therefore it was of an Egyptian origin and not imported or influenced by other cultures.**

Our main access to the ancient Egyptian history is restricted by our knowledge of their language. The Rosetta stone (found in 1799) is our only key to read, pronounce and understand hieroglyphics. It consists of fourteen lines of Egyptian hieroglyphics; thirty-two lines of Egyptian Demotic (a cursive script), and fifty-four lines of ancient Greek. In 1822 Champollion was able to decipher the meaning of the fourteen lines of hieroglyphics. There were no dictionaries, language learning books, etc., to use as reference. The discovery of the Rosetta stone revived the ancient Egyptian language, which was declared dead since the sixth century, when Egypt became an Arab colony.

As in all styles of hieroglyphic writing was limited to consonants of the words. In all these languages, the meaning of the word is generally contained in the consonants, while the vowels are added, as a rule, only to indicate the grammatical forms. Hebrew is a great example besides the Egyptian language. As such, normal sounds were not included in the written language. Egypt also had a kind of shorthand system of hieroglyphs called "hieratic," which was used for official communications and other secular matters. Later on, a still more cursive script called "demotic" was employed, presumably used for economic concerns.

The problem of translation is compounded by the symbolic language employed by the Egyptians. It is therefore up to modern scholars to penetrate the symbolism and interpret it as well as they are able to. What results from such efforts is, to a very considerable extent, determined by the **attitudes of the scholars** involved in the work. Those who believe that the ancient Egyptians were basically barbarians, will come up with one kind of interpretation, while those, who are convinced that the Egyptians were enlightened people, will make of the same text a completely different interpretation. No greater example can be seen than the one we have already addressed: the neteroo. One group of scholars interprets this as idolatry with Egypt being pagan and worshipping hosts of animals and nature with a plethora of gods. Others understand that Egypt was expressing only the concept of the attributes and varied workings of the One True God.

The fact remains that hieroglyphs can be "decoded," but not exactly "translated," and certainly not interpreted reliably or consistently. Translation of the hieroglyphs still presents difficulties.

## THE COSMIC LANGUAGE

Very important for us to note now is that every Egyptian letter contained a specific cosmic meaning. This meaning was also amplified by the sound of the letter itself. Words were constructed of these letters in a manner incorporating and amplifying the meaning of the individual letters, so that the meaning of a word emerged from the interplay of letters.

The ancient Egyptian language was a picture of reality. The word was very powerful because **the word was an image. Every picture was potentially animate.** A common expression, in our time, is that a picture is worth a thousand words. The same applies to the pictorial hieroglyphs, which not only had an overt phonetic script, but a more **secret symbolism, which conveyed the subtler metaphysical realities of the universe.** As such, it evoked an idea or concept in its entirety.

## FROM HIEROGLYPHS TO THE ROMAN ALPHABET

The "Roman" alphabet owes its origin to ancient Egypt. It is common knowledge that the letters of the Roman alphabet were adapted from the Greek alphabet. The ancient Greeks have informed us that they received their alphabet from the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians, the Hebrews, and other peoples of the lands at the eastern end of the Mediterranean all spoke dialects of the same Semitic language, and used the same consonantal alphabet

in their script. The word "alphabet" itself is made up of the Greek names of the first two letters, alpha and beta, which were their versions of the names of the same letters (and in the same order throughout) in the Semitic languages: aleph, bet. The rest of the Greek and Semitic alphabetical letters are gamma = gimel, delta = dalet, and so forth to the end, tau = tav, each name having meaning in the Semitic but not in the Greek. In 1906 Egyptologist William Petrie discovered in Sinai, a stela with hieroglyphic inscriptions, and ten tablets of rock, inscribed with characteristics of a much simpler and cruder form, which were described as **"proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions."** Later, Egyptologist Alan Gardiner was successful in proving that these proto-Sinaitic inscriptions were the votive inscriptions of the Semitic-speaking Canaanites laborers, whom the Egyptians were known to have employed. Gardiner proved that these inscriptions were "borrowed" by the Canaanites laborers, from the Egyptian language. He also proved that these **"proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions" were the connecting link between Egyptian hieroglyphic writing and the Semitic alphabetic script.**

**Subsequently, a few alphabetic inscriptions, with similar types of characters to the proto-Sinaitic inscriptions, were discovered in Palestine itself, offering corroboration of Gardiner's theory, of the derivation and adaptation of the Semitic letters from the Egyptian alphabet. The Hebrew language is derived from the Egyptian language.**

So much for the tradition that the Hebrew language was the original language of mankind as held by many Rabbis. A little tradition never hurt anyone...or does it? I don't know about you but I want the truth!





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# INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF THE LOGOS

The "Logos" comes from a Greek word that expresses a theory of creation that passed from Tantrism through Neoplatonic philosophy to Christianity. The theory was that a deity could create anything-other deities, worlds, creatures-by the power of magic words: when the name was spoken, the thing materialized.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find this concept of "Logos" going as far back as Egypt? Yes; one only has to investigate this from the Memphis theology and cosmology and we find the exact same ideas expressed of God and how creation ensued.

Now we need to pay close attention. The Logos, then, was divine essence concentrated in a Word and made manifest in creation and was in all creation as a type of link between pure spirit and matter. It bridged the gap between pure Spirit and Matter. All of mankind was believed to have possession of this "Logos;" in particular the concept was later applied as we all know to Jesus and he was called "the Word made flesh."

**Answer for yourself:** Is this concept to be understood "symbolically" and "allegorically" or "literally?"

This website will determine for certain the earliest understanding of the earliest Christians and how they understood the unique relationship between between the Logos and Jesus. But a hint for you: they did not see the Logos as Jesus in a "literal" sense as in a physical incarnation. That would come later at the hands of anti-Gnostics and we find this idea expressed in Rome's Second New Testament. The writer of the Gospel of John gave Jesus eternal existence: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John 1:1). The problem that confronts us is if this writer is responding to an already prevalent religious belief about Jesus and the Logos which was taken by the earliest Christians to be "allegorical" and not "literal."

**Answer for yourself:** Could the writer of the Gospel of John be responding to an already accepted "orthodoxy" concerning the "then understood" significance of Jesus and was this gospel writer's opinion of such a "literal" understanding of Jesus' previous existence as the Logos considered "unorthodox;" only to later under the power of anti-Gnostics of Rome become "orthodoxy" as we are taught today? Wow! Things as you will see are not what they always appear to be we find upon closer examination of the evidences that are available to us today.

Judeo-Christian thinkers defined the Logos in so many ways that it became virtually without meaning, and so was relegated to the status of a "deep mystery."

The Logos was:

- **Christ, or**
- **the Wisdom of Yahweh (as seen in Proverbs) or**
- **an archangel, or**
- **Truth, or**

- the high priest, or
- the Law,
- or the covenant, or
- the scriptures, or
- Moses, or
- the creative power, or
- the soul of the world, or
- the sun, etc.

(H. Smith, Man and His Gods. Boston. Little, Brown, & Co., 1952. p. 21). Orphic, Pythagorean, and Neoplatonic philosophers who expounded the Logos doctrine were not well understood by their Christian followers, who struggled vainly with the subtle semantics of the pagan philosophers.

The pagans' "Word made flesh" was usually Hermes, representing the *Logos spermatikos*, seminal Word, proceeding from the mouth of Zeus to beget all things through the power of his agent on earth (*Encyc. Brit.*, "Logos"). So strange as it might seem what we have considered "pagan" is not as pagan as once supposed when we stop to realize that if these religious concepts were considered "allegorical" then they expressed the same Divine precepts as the logos teaching as applied to Jesus. It is only when we begin to see these concepts as "literal" do we truly fall into idolatry. The Corpus Hermeticum praised this Word-bearer: "Holy art thou, who by the Word has created all things that exist! Holy art thou, of whom all Nature has produced the image!" Justin Martyr's Apologia earnestly tried to assimilate the attributes of Hermes-the-Word to Jesus, "on account of his wisdom," claiming that Jesus was exactly like Hermes in being the Son, Messenger, and Word of God (T.W. Doane, Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions. New York: University Books Inc., 1971. p. 375).

One of the reasons for male enthusiasm for the Logos doctrine was that it provided male gods with a method of creating, formerly the exclusive prerogative of the birth-giving Goddess. As we learned earlier that was one of the problems of patriarchal Roman Catholicism which caused their persecution of the feminine expression of God as found in Gnosticism. Hermes-the-Logos became Hermes-the-Creator, exercising the magic feminine powers he derived from living in androgynous union with Mother Aphrodite. The Perfect Word [a third-century Greek text of Hermetic (Egyptian) revelation-literature] addressed Hermes as not only the Light of the life of man but also "the fruitful Womb of All" (S. Angus, The Mystery Religions. New York: Dover Publications, 1975. p. 243).

Similarly, Hermes's Egyptian counterpart Thoth mastered the Words of Power and assumed the attributes of the Goddess Maat, "whose Word is Truth," sometimes called his spouse. Priests of Thoth's holy city, which the Greeks called Hermopolis in Egypt, said Thoth was the universal demiurge who spoke the Word of creation, *met*, and "gave birth" to the first gods (Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. London: Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1968. p. 27-28). "Met", a mother-word related to Maat, is another term expressing "female wisdom."

The oldest Oriental father-gods "gave birth" by speech, when they were first conceived by men who didn't know the real physiology of begetting. The Sanskrit word for a father-given or Brahma-given soul was *atman*, "air" or "breath," cognate with the German *atmen* and Greek *atmos*, "air." A Brahman father still establishes a paternal claim to a child by breathing its soul-name three times into its face, pretending to place the soul in the body (*Mahanirvanatantra*, (Sir John Woodroffe, trans.). New York: Dover Publications, 1967, p. 236).

The biblical Yahweh also claimed to give life by the power of his breath or "wind," which he used to animate the dry bones of the dead: "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live" (Ezekiel 37:5). This incident was probably copied from the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, wherein Marduk established his right to kingship among the gods by showing he could destroy and re-create by the power of his Word (Erich Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973. p. 16).



Among the oldest Mesopotamian texts there are stories of **deities representing "the Word."** **Notice I said "representing"!** In the Epic of Gilgamesh, Enlil the god of "air" or "breath" was also a Logos. "The spirit of the Word is Enlil, the spirit of the heart of Anu (heaven)." Enlil embodied "the word which stilleth the heavens above" (Epic of Gilgamesh, Harmondsworth. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd. 1960. p. 24).

**Though male gods popularized the idea of the Logos, the ability to destroy and re-create by Word-power belonged originally to the Goddess**, who created languages, alphabets, and the secret mantras known as Words of Power, Egyptian *hekau*, creations of Hecate (Maat). Every manifestation of life was brought into being by the Great Goddess Kali with her Word, **Om**, an invocation of her own "pregnant belly." **This was the primordial Logos, "the supreme syllable, the mother of all sound"** (*Upanishads*, New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1957. p. 53). The fifty letters of Kali's Sanskrit alphabet were "matrika," or "mothers." Hindu scriptures said: "As from a mother comes birth, **so from "matrika," or sound the world proceeds**" (*Mahanirvanatantra*, (Sir John Woodroffe, trans.). New York: Dover Publications, 1967, cvii. p. 12). "Om" was the "mantramatrika," of "Mother of Mantras: and these divine Words spoken by Kali created and destroyed everything, including all gods (Eithne Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game*. London: Victor Gallancz Ltd. 1959. p. 201). **Kali's creative voice had its own personification** as a Goddess Vac (Voice), engendered in celestial waters, at the summit of the Cosmic Tree (Count Goblet d'Alviella, *The Migration of Symbols*. New York: University Books, 1956. p. 162). Vac brought forth the god who called himself All-father, as well as everything else in the universe (Robert Briffault, *The Mothers (3 vols)*. New York: Macmillan, 1927. p. 1,7.). She reappeared in Greek myth as a disembodied voice, the nymph Echo, who brought the flower-god Narcissus to his doom by trapping his soul in her water-mirror. In Arabic her **Om** became **Umm, meaning mother**, matrix, source, principle, or prototype: the Logos of the Sufi (Idris Shah, *The Sufis*. London: Octagon Press, 1964. p 175)

Om was a familiar sound. Celts called their Moon-mother Omh, "She Who Is." Shebans called their Moon-temple at Marib Aum, the Belly of the World. Lydians placed the same Belly of the World in their own country as *anomphalos* or navel-stone, hub of the universe, "made flesh" in their Goddess-queen Omphale. It was not an exclusively Lydian custom; every temple in Greece hid an *omphalos*.

Om was Alpha, the letter of creation, repeated again as the final letter of destruction, Omega, which means literally "great Om." Its Greek form is a horseshoe, based on the Hindu symbol of the yonic Gate. When the biblical prophet proclaimed: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is yet to come" (Revelation 1:8), he used words copied from the temple of the Great Mother at Sais, where they were written on stone many centuries before the Bible was compiled (*Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. London: Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1968. p. 37).

**The Logos idea was virtually identical with the Oriental concept of the Oversoul, which had been an essence of the Great Mother but was re-defined as an essence of the Great Father or of his son, the Savior.** Origen said, "As our body while consisting of human members is yet held together by one soul, so the universe is to be thought of as an immense living being which is held together by one soul, the power of the logos (Ralph Shirley, *Occultists and Mystics of All Ages*. New York: University Books Inc. 1972. p. 46). **Christ was only one of many aspirants to the title of Logos.** Before him, Attis was hailed as the Logos "who holds the universe together" (Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*. New York: Vintage Books. 1958. p. 367). **But before them all was the Great Mother:** "The supreme Shakti has the form both of the seed and the sprout of the revealed coming-together of Shiva and Shakti; subtlest of the subtle, She is contained in all that lies between the first and the last letters of the alphabet, which contains the original root forms from which the names of everything in the world are compounded" (Philip Rawson, *The Art of Tantra*. Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973. p. 198).

**The Christian idea that Christ was God's "Word made flesh" was an idea common to all the ancient pagan world. Every king was literally God manifested in the flesh (allegorically).**

whether he was a real ruler or a sacramental surrogate ruler. Usually he was called Savior, and begotten by the god on a temple virgin. He was chosen and invested by holy words and name-souls. Antiochus of Syria, for instance, received the divine surname of Epiphanes, "God Made Manifest (in the flesh)" (Richard Cavendish, The Powers of Evil. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975. p. 182).

Not even Christians, however, managed to purge the Logos of all its original feminine connotations. Clement of Alexandria distorted his symbolism to the point of absurdity when trying to connect the Logos with parenthood: "The Word is everything to the child, both father and mother, teacher and nurse. . . . The nutriment is the milk of the Father. . . and the Word alone supplies us children with the milk of love... . For this reason, seeking is called sucking; to those infants who seek the Word, the Father's loving breasts supply milk" (Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels. New York: Random House, 1979. p. 67-68).

These old notions arose from the ancient belief that a mother gave her child its name-soul along with the first breast milk, as she breathed a Word that would henceforth define and personify the child. In the Old Testament, children were named by their mothers, never by their fathers (Robert Briffault. The Mothers (3 vols). New York: Macmillanj. 1927, p. 372). Thus a universal Parent would be expected to give name-souls to all creation along with universal breast milk.

A giver of nourishment was also a giver of Law, derived from the same root word as Logos. Priest-chieftain of the Icelandic *Althing* - supreme governing body of the tribes-had a title now translated Lawspeaker. But that is not the literal translation of the Icelandic word, *lögsôgumathr*, which really means Mother-Who-Speaks-the-Word (Brian Branston, Gods of the North. London: Thames And Hudson,. 1955. p. 30).

The doctrine of the Logos was so widespread that Christians could hardly be expected to ignore it. It was one of many ancient ideas that the church eagerly seized. Medieval philosophers and theologians tried to make it reconcile faith with reason, insisting that the two must be identical because their root was the same: "that no more than one source of truth, the Logos, had ever existed, and that everything of any value in human wisdom, especially in Greek philosophy, flowed from that sole source. Plato himself was reputed to have pilfered from Moses" (Charles Guignebert, Ancient, Medieval and Modern Christianity. New York: University Books. 1961. p. 258).

Philosophical and theological thinkers of the scholastic movement of the 11th through the 15th century were ignorant of the ancient *logoi*, sacred writings of the Orphics, mentioned by Plato and other philosophers as a vast mass of literature amounting to a true "Bible"; these writings had all been destroyed during the early centuries of Christianity (W.K.C. Guthrie. The Greeks and Their Gods. Boston: Beacon Press. 1955.p. 310, 313). But there were Christian Gnostic writings that had copied the Orphics and transmitted the idea of the Logos to Christian dogma even after they were declared "heresies." The *Gospel of Truth* said, for example, "When the Word appeared, the Word which is in the hearts of those who pronounced It.. . It was not only a sound, but It had taken on a body as well" (Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion. Boston: Beacon Press: 1963. p. 76). Christians gave such assertions a rather simplistic interpretation, assuming the body was Christ's. Yet the Gnostic Christians differed in that they held to a mystical and allegorical meaning of "the Christ" and limited it not to only one person as had Western Christianity.





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## THE LOGOS TEACHING

*the "Logos" is God's Likeness, by whom the whole kosmos was fashioned.-  
Philo Judaeus*

*We speak of God, of the Son [Logos], his Word, and of the holy Spirit; and we say that the Father, the Son [Logos], and the Spirit are united in power. For the Son [Logos] is the intelligence, reason, and wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit is an effluence, as light from fire. In the same way we recognize that there are other powers which surround matter and pervade it.-  
Athenagoras, early Christian apologist*

In Hellenistic cosmology, the First Cause [God] was envisioned as transcending human understanding. In the Republic, Plato suggested that it was even "beyond Being," a notion which was to have considerable influence for well over a millennium. The Pythagoreans portrayed the first principle as the **Monad**, indicating that it is both a primeval Unity and apart (*monas*) from all other things, transcending time, space, and the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. As Clement of Alexander succinctly notes, "The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name and conception" (Clement of Alexander, *Stromata*, 5.11; in Ante-Nicean Fathers, II, 461). While all things have a relation to it [the First Cause], this primeval Source (*archê*) was never envisioned as a "personal God," or as a thinking and planning divinity like Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, who consciously decided to create the universe. For the Greeks, the Supreme Principle is utterly simple, and superior to conscious thought and decision-making, even though it is symbolically identified with the power of Cosmic Mind in some writings. As Origen notes, *"The Word can also be 'the Son' because he announces the secrets of the Father, who is 'Mind' (Nous) analogous to the Son who is called 'Word' (Logos). For as the word (Logos=Reason) in us is the messenger of what the mind perceives, so the Word of God, since he has known the Father, reveals the Father whom he has known, because no creature can come into contact with him without a guide"* (Commentary on John 1.278).

**Answer for yourself:** Do you remember that in an earlier article we saw that Thoth was believed to be one of the 4 major aspects of the First Cause as known by the Egyptians and was given the name "Word" and had its own theology and city devoted to the study of this "Word?" That means the original concept of the "Word" began with Egypt and not with the Greeks!

When reading these later Hellenistic texts of the early Church Fathers it is important to remember that Nous or Mind on a cosmological level represents the principle of **pure Intelligence [God]** itself and is superior to the activity of discursive reasoning, mental analysis, etc. Therefore, God can be pur Mind without engaging in inferior activities such as thinking, planning, and decision making; nonetheless, it is through the cultivation of divine Logos in the human soul that we are led upward toward the recognition of the Highest

**(God).** This path requires study, meditation, and prayer upon the things revealed by the First Cause in the realm of Being from which revelation is given to mankind in this realm of Change.

Because of its abundant perfection, the Source [First Cause in the Realm of Being] unconditionally gives forth a secondary principle, the "Logos", in the same way that the sun gives forth rays of light. Now you better understand how the Sun was the picture of the Logos. The "Logos" is not the First Cause, any more than rays of light "are" the sun, but nonetheless the two are very intimately related. In this ancient teaching, the "Logos" is the first, harmonically differentiated "image" of the First Cause. The "Logos" represents the first level of real manifestation or Being made visible in our realm of Change through the actions of humanity, for it encompasses within itself all the laws and relations which are later articulated in the phenomenal universe. Since the "Logos" is the emanation of the Transcendent Absolute, it may be poetically and symbolically described as "the Son of God" [NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE LITERAL SON OF GOD], as we see in the works of Philo, the Hermetic writings of Egypt, and early Christianity. Underlying the source of all reality, the "Logos" is related to the principle of Nous or Universal Intellect, the "repository" of all the cosmic Forms and principles on which creation is based. And as the rational image of Divine Intellect, humanity is itself the living, incarnate image of the "Logos." Notice I said "humanity" and not just one person. Again we see that humanity reflects this "Logos." Some men and women who observe and manifest the Order of the realm of Being as expressed in the Laws of the realm of Being exert a Heavenly effect upon this realm of Change (bring Heaven to bear upon Earth). Jesus was believed to be one of the best examples of this by his followers and those who knew him best. This does not make Jesus God however; only very Godly. Said another way, he revealed God the Father to men like few could. This again does not make him God or should make him the object of worship. When such was done later by those who either went too far or failed to grasp the true understanding of the "Logos" then idolatry and blasphemy results from the failure to understand properly the "Logos" doctrine as expressed in the Gospel of John and the writings of men like Plato and Philo.

According to Clement of Alexandria,

*the image of God is His Word [Logos], the genuine Son of Mind, the Divine Word, the archetypal light of light; and the image of the Word is the true man, the mind which is in man, who is therefore said to have been made "in the image and likeness of God" (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to the Greeks 10, Ante-Nicene Fathers, II, 199).*

Let me say it very plainly. The Divine Will of the Creator in the realm of Being above which is the will of the First Cause, is revealed to man in this earth [the realm of change] by the "Logos" which is the mind of God which is within every man and woman. This will of the Creator/Father can be discerned if they listen to the still small voice within or seek it themselves through study, prayer, and meditation upon the things of God expressed through His Laws. This will of God exists within humanity and the hearts of mankind and emerges to influence humanity when mankind sets his heart upon the things above and seeks God and tunes his heart and mind upon the things of God.

Invariably, the powers of Light and Life were associated with the nature of the "Logos" in Hellenistic thought, for these are among the most central principles in all of creation. Like the early Christians, the pagan cosmologists held that humanity was created in the "image" of God. To illustrate this, the Hermetic writings of Egypt present several schemes; in one of the more attractive versions, Eternity (Aeon) is said to be



the image of God, Cosmos is the image of Eternity, the Sun is the image of Cosmos, and Man is the image of the Sun.' Because of these factors, the "Logos" has often been pictured in various cosmologies as Anthropos, the figure of the Perfect Man, the archetype and exemplar of humanity. As said before, those who knew Jesus best knew him to be the best that humanity and Judaism had to offer. He above all others lived the Torah and the Laws of God [the First Cause] better than any other. Such Ordering Principles of Life expressed through God's Laws was not only his message but his life-style. Few if any exhibited such a pattern of the Divine among his fellow men. That is why Jesus is the Avatar of the Jewish nation and recognized such by his disciples and apostles and presented to the world in such a manner by those who knew him best (as the symbolic incarnation of the Logos).

*But again Jesus as the Son of God [Logos] is to be understood in an allegorical manner and not a literal manner and worship is to be given to the First Cause and not the "Logos" manifested in different degrees within mankind; even Jesus!*

## THE LOGOS AS HARMONY

The nature of the "Logos" was also represented by the natural principle of musical harmony. Mathematically, harmony depends upon the nature of "Logos" or ratio. Both pagans and Christians alike expressed the nature of the "Logos" in these terms, for it is through the power of harmony that all the parts of creation are reconciled into a greater whole. Harmony on earth, the realm of Change, is to be manifested when the principles of Heaven are lived out by humanity.

Let us think for a moment. God demand sole worship. When we worship another, even with good intentions but unknowingly we are doing wrong and we are not aware of it, we bring disharmony and not harmony. We bring disorder and not order. When humanity suffers it manifest disharmony and disorder. When we feed the poor we bring harmony and order to bear upon disorder and disharmony. When we clothe the naked we bring order and harmony to disharmony and disorder. When we move a landmark of our neighbor we bring disharmony and disorder and not harmony. In so doing one often winds up killed and this furthers the disorder and disharmony. All the Commandments of God, both positive and negative, are the Absolute expressions of the will of the Divine Creator. We call Him God. The Laws and Commandments of the Divine Realm not only express the will of God but are manifestations of the greatest Love and Order that emanates from the Divine Realm of Being. When humanity takes upon themselves to adhere to and observe such Laws and Commandments then the Order of Heaven and the Harmony that is Heaven exerts it's influence upon this latter realm of Change. In this way the Mind of God is [Logos] is applied by mankind to the realm of matter where humanity finds its home. Then and only then does this passage find its fulfillment:

***Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
(KJV)***

From this we can also surmise that the early Christian ideal of the *church* or assembly (*ekklessia*), the mystical body of Christ, was itself seen by some as a social manifestation of the celestial harmony, whereby all individuals might be unified and uplifted into a greater whole (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to the Greeks 2, Witt translation, "Plotinus and Posidonius," 201).



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## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE TRUE MEANING OF THE "LOGOS"

If you were like me you grew up being taught that the Logos in the prologue of John's Gospel was Jesus. It seemed so simple; that is until I began serious study into the Bible and the Hellenistic literature within it which I found out was passed off as the religion of Jesus. Jesus is a Jew and did not have much in common with Athens or Rome. It is a shame to live your whole life before God and die and find out that you have lived as an idolator and blasphemer because you did not "rightly divide" the Bible you were given.

There are many ways to understand the concept of the "Logos" and how the ancients and the writer of the Gospel of John understood it and for our inquiry in this series of articles it is pertinent for us to understand if Jesus is to be understood as the LITERAL "Logos" and part of God or only as a picture of the "Logos" as described by his followers as they understood him to be the best that humanity had to offer because of his life and teachings and therefore was to be understood as the "Logos" in the form of an allegory only. The difference is major; in fact the understanding of the "Logos" in a literal senses as applied to Jesus renders you an idolator and blasphemer. Be not mistaken. Christianity teaches Jesus as God and the Literal Logos!

**Answer for yourself:** Has Gentile Christianity, as expressed today, forgotten the true meaning of the "Logos" and applied incorrect concepts to this New Testament Jesus and mistakenly understood his depiction in the New Testament and taught him to billions as the "Literal Logos in error" and rendered such believers as idolators?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be must remotely possible that the depiction of Jesus in the New Testament could be the personification of this Logos both among and within mankind and not refer to a historical person? "No way" you say. Well hang on as our studies will progress to this proof but some things have to be understood in the beginning before we can see it all clearly and come to the true understanding of just who this "Christ Jesus" of the New Testament actually is.

The answer to the above question concerning idolatry is "yes." The incorrect teaching of the Logos has rendered Christians as idolators and they don't know it. This is what I will attempt to prove to you in these articles as well as this website: <http://firstnewtestament.netfirms.com>. Sadly Gentile Christianity preaches what it does not know or understand. It is way past time to learn the truth about the "Logos" and the concepts connected with it as used in the Gospel of John. It is to this task we now must turn and it my hope you find this challenging set of articles both beneficial and food for your repentance since being taught incorrectly by Gentile Christianity. There is nothing we can do for our loved ones who perished and met God with the sin of idolatry in their lives because of this erroneous teaching but if you are reading these articles there is something you can do about it concerning yourself and your family; thus the need for ministries like Bet Emet Ministries who have devoted themselves to serious study of our inherited Christian faith.

## THE MEANINGS OF LOGOS...HAVE WE UNDERSTOOD IT CORRECTLY AS UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE GIVEN IT?



The prologue to the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, which begins with the unforgettable line ***"In the beginning was the Word,"*** is instinctively recognized by many readers as one of the most beautiful passages in all the sacred texts of humanity. This writing describes the nature of the "Word" as a cosmic forming principle, its mission, and the manifestation of the Word in the figure of Jesus, the avatar of the Christian faith. **Unfortunately, despite the beauty and profoundness of the Prologue, most modern readers have not been able to unlock its inner meaning, for they have never been given the necessary key.**

**Central to the Prologue is the concept of "Word," a very inadequate rendering of the original Greek term "Logos", one of the most important concepts of the Hellenistic world.** Notice I did not say this was an important concept to the Jewish world but the Greek world. Let us not forget that Jesus is a Jew and not a Greek. In ancient Greek, **Logos has many meanings, but none of them is truly to be understood as "Word,"** which is based on a translation of a translation. **So the writer of the Gospel of John is really not actually saying the "Logos" is "the Word" but sadly this is the translation we have been given.** It is important to also remember what the earliest understanding of this "Logos" was to the Egyptians to whom this concept was given first by Divine Revelation. Remembering this then we can easily see and understand that often Greek and English are very poor languages for translation of concepts which find their origin in prior languages [such as Hebrew or Egyptian] which express such concepts in a much better way. When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, "Logos" became "Verbum"; and when the English King James translation was made from the Latin version, "Verbum" became "Word," **twice removed from the original text.**

Since "Logos" has so many meanings in ancient Greek, ranging from the scientific to the mystical, it is best left untranslated, as its nuances resound on many levels. Indeed, as E. R. Goodenough once noted, any student of Greek religion and cosmology "must first of all wipe that meaning ["Word"] from his mind and use the untranslated term "Logos" as he would use a new term in chemistry.

Nothing more true could ever be said as every Christian needs to likewise wipe from his mind all prior concepts he has heard or been taught concerning the "Logos" as he has not been taught correctly. Among its many meanings,

**"Logos" designates the power of "reason," the pattern or order of things, the principle of relationship, and an organized articulation of something.** In general, it has the following meanings:

- 1) Order or pattern
- 2) Ratio or proportion
- 3) Oratio, a discourse, articulation or account, even a "sermon"
- 4) Reason, both in the sense of rationality and in the sense of an articulation of the cause of something
- 5) Principle or cause (logoi ="principles," "ratios," "reasons")
- 6) A principle of mediation and harmony between extremes

**"Logos" has the same meaning as both the Latin words "ratio" and "oratio". "Ratio" is the principle of Reason in its many senses, yet it is also ratio in a mathematical sense, as in continued geometrical proportion. "Oratio" is a discourse, an articulation, a setting forth of the "ratio" or nature of things. "Logos", as a principle, is the natural order of things, the principle of reason, relation, and harmony, which exists both within the natural fabric of the universe and within the human mind.** Now understand the prior sentence in "red" is a very, very important concept in understanding the use of "logos" in the Gospel of John as we will see shortly.

**The key words in the above definition is "reason," "relationship," and "harmony" both in the natural world and within the human mind (the soul which contains the will and emotions of an individual). It**

is the faculty whereby one thing is related to another through "analogy", or the power of "proportional insight." (Analogia in Greek refers to continued geometrical proportion). Of no less importance in the Greek understanding of the "logos" is mystical and cosmological thought, including early Christian thought, the idea of The "Logos" in a cosmic sense encompassed all of these meanings and refers to the underlying Order of the Universe, the blueprint on which all creation is based.

*If we are to appreciate the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and other Greek mystical writings, all of these meanings must be simultaneously held in mind.*

Let us again remember what we learned from Egypt concerning the "Logos". Because of its abundant perfection, the Source [First Cause in the Realm of Being] unconditionally gives forth a secondary principle, the "Logos", in the same way that the sun gives forth rays of light. The "Logos" is not the First Cause, any more than rays of light "are" the sun, but nonetheless the two are very intimately related. In this ancient teaching, the "Logos" is the first, harmonically differentiated "image" of the First Cause. The "Logos" represents the first level of real manifestation or Being made visible in our realm of Change through the actions of humanity, for it encompasses within itself all the laws and relations which are later articulated in the phenomenal universe. Since the "Logos" is the emanation of the Transcendent Absolute, it may be poetically and symbolically described as "the Son of God" [NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE LITERAL SON OF GOD], as we see in the works of Philo, the Hermetic writings of Egypt, and early Christianity. Underlying the source of all reality, the "Logos" is related to the principle of Nous or Universal Intellect, the "repository" of all the cosmic Forms and principles on which creation is based. And as the rational image of Divine Intellect, humanity is itself the living, incarnate image of the "Logos." Notice I said "humanity" and not just one person. Again we see that humanity reflects this "Logos." Some men and women who observe and manifest the Order of the realm of Being as expressed in the Laws of the realm of Being exert a Heavenly effect upon this realm of Change (bring Heaven to bear upon Earth). This does not make the Jesus of the New Testament God however; only a Godly manifestation. Said another way, "the Christ" as Jesus, Greek for Yahweh's Salvation, revealed God the Father to men like few could. This again does not make him God or should make him the object of worship since he as the "Logos" is not the primal cause but only secondary to God. When such was done later by those who either went to far or failed to grasp the true understanding of the "Logos" then idolatry and blasphemy results from the failure to understand properly the "Logos" doctrine as expressed in the Gospel of John and the writings of men like Plato and Philo.

Then if you followed the above article and understood that the "Logos" of John was "Jesus" only in NAME in that "Jesus" is Greek for "Joshua" which is "Yahweh's Salvation" that came through the "Logos" within every man, then the author of the Gospel of John is saying that in the beginning with God was NOT a human or fleshly man but a harmony and natural order of things. That in the beginning with God was an ordered pattern and blueprint for all creation in the mind of God. And in so doing there existed a relationship between the invisible realm of pure Spirit and Energy (God) and the realm of physical existence and matter. Both were in harmony.

Now with this understanding of the "Logos" restored to us then let us look at the Gospel of John and see if we can ascertain just what it is saying.



*John 1:1-10 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (KJV)*

In the beginning with God was this harmony and order and reason of God that will be manifested later in the creation. This "Logos" was not a man but a emanation from God of Himself an an extension of His image that would mediate between the realm of pure Spirit and the realm of matter (mankind). It would be through this "Logos" (masculine) and the "Sophia" (feminine) that God would manifest His invisible presence into the physical and visible world of mankind and He chose to do it within His creation (mankind). John 1, verse 3 says that all things physical and visible was made by this "Logos" as this emanation from God which mediated between the realms of the invisible and visible. Men knew not that within them dwells God and that they were to live and order their lives by the Divine Harmony that existed in Heaven. Notice that the "man" sent in these verses of the Gospel of John is not "Jesus-who is the Joshua concept of Yahweh's Salvation personified but John the Baptist with the message of repentance and return to God's Laws that express this Divine order and harmony in Heaven on Earth if obeyed". John was come to bear witness of the "light" of God in the form of the "Logos" among mankind and illuminated the way and ways of God to every man in the world. Sadly the world knew not of this "Logos" or "Christ within them" therefore we see the need for such teaching:

*Col 1:26-27 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but **now** is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

There you have it. John chapter one when referring to "the Logos" is not referring to a human being named Jesus but rather to a Spiritual Dynamic and Religious Concept within every person (the Logos which is Yahweh's Salvation...not the play on words: Joshua/Yahweh's Salvation in Hebrew is Jesus in the Greek). Of course the New Testament was written in Greek so we would not expect to find the word Joshua but yet we do in the form of the Greek "Jesus". It is this self-awareness of one's true identity, that they have come from God and that God dwells within them, which needed to be imparted to God's children as they are awakened to their true spiritual identity.

*Eph 5:14-15 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, (KJV)*

In closing notice also what Paul is saying to these people once they awaken to "the Christ" within. He is calling on them to submit to and adhere to the pattern of Law and Order given to mankind. He is calling for repentance just like John the Baptist did and calling for all men everywhere to turn from sin and disorder and return to the harmony and order of Heaven on Earth as found when one observes the Laws of God for his life.

The Logos of John chapter one is not about a historical person! John's "Logos" is a Gnostic religious belief that was ALWAYS understood by Gnostics and Gnostic Christians as an allegory only for a Divine Spiritual Concept among men.



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## THE "LOGOS" PERSONIFIED

While the early Christians personified the "Logos" in the figure of Jesus, the Greeks had represented the "Logos" in the figure of Apollo, the god of geometry and music. Another favorite representation was Hermes, who, as the church fathers acknowledge, was actually called "the "Logos"" by the Greeks. Thus Justin Martyr writes:

*"When we say, as before, that he [Jesus] was begotten by God as the Word of God in a unique manner beyond the ordinary birth, this should be no strange thing for you who speak of Hermes as the announcing word [Logos] from God" (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 22; in Richardson, Early Christian Fathers, 256).*

For example, according to the gnostic sect of the Naassenes, "Hermes is the Word who has expressed and fashioned the things that have been, that are and that will be" (Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies 5.2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, V, 50); translation by Doresse, Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics, 84).

In ancient Egypt, where the "Logos" theology appears at an early date, the Greek god Hermes was identified with the Egyptian divinity Thoth. Thoth was the personification of the universal order, the "heart and tongue" of the sun god Ra who "spoke the words" which resulted in the creation of the heavens and the earth (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, I, 407-408). According to Iamblichus, Thoth was the author of 36,525 books [equal to the number of days in one hundred solar years] (Iamblichus, On The Mysteries 7.1 (Taylor Translation, 300). Thoth was represented as the "scribe of the gods," the revealer of mathematics, geometry, and priestly knowledge. As E. A. Wallis Budge points out:

Thoth's knowledge and powers of calculation measured out the heavens, and planned the earth, and everything which is in them; his will and power kept the forces in heaven and earth in equilibrium; it was his great skill in celestial mathematics which made proper use of the laws (*maāt*) upon which the foundation and maintenance of the universe rested; it was he who directed the motions of the heavenly bodies and their times and seasons; and without his words the gods, whose existence depended on them, could not have kept their place among the followers of Ra (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, I, 407-408).

As "the reason and mental powers" of the sun god Ra, Thoth was "also the means by which their will was translated into speech (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, I, 407). As the revealer of celestial knowledge, the attributes of Thoth are later reflected in the figure Hermes Trismegistos (Thrice-Great Hermes), the reputed author of the Egyptian Hermetic writings. While the actual authors of these important works are unknown, like the unknown authors of the Christian gospels, Iamblichus repeats the tradition that "Hermes, the god who presides over language, was formerly very properly considered as common to all priests; and the power who presides over the true science concerning the gods is one and the same in the whole of things. Hence our ancestors dedicated the inventions of their wisdom to this deity, inscribing all their own writings with the name of Hermes" (Iamblichus, On The Mysteries 7.1 (Taylor Translation, 17-18).



The Greek Hermetic tractates were written and used in Egypt during a period stretching from perhaps 100 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. by members of Hermetic spiritual communities which were active in synthesizing native Egyptian teachings with the expressions of Greek philosophy. The ideas of this "pagan gnosticism" were certainly "in the air" during the formative days of early Christianity, and while "no direct literary relationship can be traced. . . it seems clear that [the person who wrote the Gospel of] John was working with similar presuppositions and along similar lines to those of the Hermetic authors" (C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John*, 31). If one looks into this he see remarkable parallels between the surviving Hermetic hymns and recently discovered documents of Christian gnosis.

The Hermetic writings are cast as revelation discourses between Hermes Trismegistos, the spiritual "father," and Tat, his "son," the aspiring initiate. In an esoteric sense, "Hermes" and "Tat" may represent two aspects of an individual's soul, the higher and lower natures respectively. Through "his" writings and discourse with his disciples, Hermes Trismegistos reveals teachings of a spiritual and cosmological nature, concerning the nature of God, the soul, the origin and structure of the cosmos, and the path through which the soul may experience its divinizing rebirth in the divine principle of Mind or Nous. Common to all of these writings are parallels to the Hellenistic "Logos" doctrine as it has been summarized in these articles.

## THE ROLE OF THE GNOSTIC SAVIOR

According to the underlying myth of Gnosis, humanity is asleep, forgetful of its celestial origin and true nature. It is the task of the "Gnostic Revealer" to descend through the heavenly spheres and fan the slumbering sparks of spiritual knowledge which lie dormant within the soul, leading to the recognition of one's authentic nature and spiritual destiny. In Christianity, Jesus is personified as the Gnostic Revealer, the teacher of saving knowledge, especially in such works as the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas. In the Hermetic writings, Hermes Trismegistos represents another Hellenistic manifestation of the "Logos", also personified as the Gnostic Revealer. While one may have many teachers in life, Clement of Alexandria states that the ultimate spiritual teacher is the "Logos" itself, "the Teacher from whom all instruction comes" (Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 11 (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, II, 203). According to the ancients, the "Logos" exists without, yet also within. We can never be separated from the harmony of the universe because we are its living reflection, even if in our slumber, this recognition has been temporarily obscured.

Like the teachings of the early Christians, the Hermetic writings focus upon the mystery of the soul's "rebirth" and transfiguration, the discovery of "the inner man," which results in a divinization of the personality. Through this existential realization, the gnostic - the true initiate - discovers who he is, where he has been, and where he is going. The gnostic realization is that awakened, transfigured humanity is a manifestation of *Nous*, the Divine Intellect, the first emanation of the unknowable Source (God). In one of the Hermetic writings, *The Cup or the Monad*, the story is told of how the world creator, while giving each person a share of reason (*logos*), did not bestow on every soul an equal portion of Mind. Rather, Mind was "set up in the midst for souls, just as it were a prize" (*Corpus Hermeticum* 4 ("The Cup or Monad"), 3 (Mead translation, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, II, 56). In language which strongly parallels that of early Christianity, Hermes explains the liberating baptism in the Cup of Mind. The world creator, he says

filled a mighty cup with it, and sent it down, joining a Herald to it, to whom He gave command to make this proclamation to the hearts of men: Baptize thyself with this Cup's baptism, what heart can do so; you who have faith can ascend to Him who sent down the cup, you who know why you have come into being! As many then as understood the Herald's tidings and doused themselves in Mind, became partakers in the Gnosis; and when they had "received the Mind" they were made "perfect men." But they who do not understand the tidings, these, since they possess the aid of Reason ("*Logos*") only and not Mind (*Nous*), are ignorant of why and how they have come into being (*Corpus Hermeticum* 4.4 (Mead translation, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, II, 57).

Elsewhere, in another work, *The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth*, Hermes explains the process through

which this divinization is experienced. Recalling the passage in the Fourth Gospel where Nicodemus asks, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*,

Tat proclaims "I know not, thrice-greatest one, from what womb a man can be born again, nor from what seed" (Corpus Hermeticum 13 ("The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth"), I (Scott translation, *Hermetica*, 1, 239).

**Answer for yourself:** Can this be just a coincidence in such exact wording?

Hermes explains that the womb of rebirth is Wisdom and that the Will of God is the begetter. The mystery of rebirth-the race of the Divine Sonship-cannot be taught, but, when the time is right, God recalls the knowledge of the spiritual realities to one's awareness, the knowledge the soul possessed before being born into a body. As Walter Scott summarizes the teaching of this tractate:

The man whom the Rebirth brings into being is a son of God; he belongs to the world of Mind; he is composed of divine Powers. He who has been born again has become an incorporeal being; he is no longer a thing visible to bodily eyes.... He sees things no longer by bodily sense; he sees with the eye of Mind. And thus seeing, he finds himself to be one with all that exists; he feels himself to be omnipresent and eternal. The new self which has thus come into being is imperishable. He who has once become a god, and son of God, can never cease to be that which he has become (Scott, *Hermetica*, II, 372).

In this ecstatic, transcendent state, both Christian and Hermetic mystics entered into divine union with the "Logos", the Divine Intellect, the source of Life and Light. Instructed by the "Logos" itself, they became its mouthpiece, and could thus honestly proclaim that the realizations they experienced were the direct teachings of Christ or Hermes. It is no doubt from such ecstatic, heightened states of consciousness that many of the inspired *logia* or "sayings of the Lord" originated that later found their way into the early Christian literature. That is why Jesus - the "Logos" personified as the "Gnostic Revealer" - can accurately say in the *Gospel of Thomas*, "He who will drink from My mouth will become like Me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him" (Gospel of Thomas 108 (in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 137).

Generally speaking, the ancient gnostics primarily viewed Christ as an eternal, celestial power, the "Logos", with which it is possible to have an intimate, personal relation, since our higher consciousness is made in its image. For this reason, gnostics stressed the experiential union with the divine, and showed little interest in the historical Jesus, whom it has always been impossible to know in a concrete sense, or even accurately in a historical sense. Because of this, gnostic speculation has always possessed a very strong ahistorical, cosmological tendency and dimension, preferring to concentrate on the liberating realization of Christ within. Now you know Paul as a Gnostic not only because of many of his religious teachings in the New Testament but he was also unconcerned about the teachings of the historical Jesus.

This realization, of which the mystics speak, is the secret of initiation, and was referred to by the early Christians in a number of ways. The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel makes it clear that those who "received" the "Logos" experienced a divinizing energy, thus "becoming Sons of God," a transformation also referred to in the Hermetic writings. Elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, this is referred to in Greek as "the birth from above" (John 3:3). Origen, in his work *Against Celsus*, states that those who follow the example of "the **Sun** of Righteousness," who sent forth His rays from Judaea, become not only followers of Christ, but Christs in their own right (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.79). An even more appealing analogy is offered by Clement, who writes that not even the sun can show us the true God. That is because:

The healthful Word or Reason, who is the Sun of the soul, alone can do that; through Him alone, when He has risen within in the depth of the mind, the soul's eye is illuminated (Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 6 (Loeb Classical Library translation, 155).



## THE LOGOS AS A MEDIATOR....AGAIN SYMBOLIC AND NOT LITERAL

One of the primary roles of the "Logos" in Greek thought is its function as celestial mediator, the "geometric mean" between extremes. That is why Jesus proclaims, in the Gospel of John, "I am the Way" and "I am the Door." As the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel states, "No one has at any time seen God." However, "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." Not only is the "Logos" the image and manifestation of the otherwise transcendent Source, but it is the connecting principle through which we are joined back to the One, and that is why Jesus is represented as the mediator between heaven and earth in Christian symbolism. But again make no mistake about it; we can look at the "Logos" within each of us as a mediator between the realm of change and the realm of Being; between matter and Spirit. Jesus was symbolic of "the Christ" as explained above but when this understanding become literalized then the symbolic meaning of mediatorship is completely lost and the end result is idolatry as taught by the Laws of Noah as well as the Hebrew Torah!

As Christianity evolved into a collective belief system, it developed a political structure and creeds, teaching that Jesus came and left at a particular point in time, and that it was only possible to achieve salvation by joining the ranks of the organized church. At the same time, it outlawed other forms of religious expression, and confiscated the property of prominent individuals who resisted conversion to the new faith. The church thereby proclaimed itself the official mediator between man and God, thus usurping the original function of Christ the "Logos". However, according to the gnostic approach, the "Logos" is an ever-present celestial power, not limited by time, space, or political boundaries-nor to a single appearance. It underlies the structure of the universe and consciousness, and, for those attuned to its nature, the "Logos" illuminates the inner recesses of the heart with eternal, spiritual knowledge. That is why Jesus, in the ancient Gospel of Thomas, can accurately say"

*"It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the All. From Me did the All come forth, and unto Me did the All extend. Split a piece of wood and I am there."*

Now hopefully you have followed the logic and teaching concerning the "Logos" as it was originally understood by those to whom it was given by Divine Revelation. Hopefully you can see how Gentile Christianity has diverted completely from the original concept as understood not only by the Egyptians but the Jewish faith and religion as well. Today 2.5 billion Christians are entangled in the hideous sin of idolatry and blasphemy because of this loss of knowledge and truth concerning the "Logos" and its role in creation let alone its role in humanity and how it is to be properly understood as applied to Yeshua/Jesus. I pray that you now fully understand how these allegorical and symbolic concepts were "LITERALIZED" by Roman Catholicism. The adherents to such "literalized" religious beliefs strayed from truth and were led into idolatry and blasphemy where they end up with more than one God. This goes against the whole of Old Testament Revelation as Israel was led out of polytheism into Ethical Monotheism. That was their purpose; to reveal the ONE God to the world. Then the antisemitic Gentile Church reverses this course and moves backward into polytheism and idolatry and takes untold millions of unknowledgeable believers with them. I pray these articles have exposed the truth to you and you can see these truths for yourself and that you seriously consider the need for repentance in your life if you have fallen prey to such distortions of truth as taught by Gentile Christianity these last 1800 years. Repentance from idolatry brings you back into close relationship with God; the way it was originally intended. Shalom.



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## THE "LOGOS" AS THE THE SPIRITUAL SUN

Well now it is going to get more difficult for the Christian as we progress in our study.

*I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Jesus (John 8.12)*

We saw in a previous article that the "Logos" represents the heart of the cosmic pattern and the source of existence. Mankind recognized early on that it's source of "existence" was the Sun and therefore the Sun became the emblem or the symbol of man's life and light (of God).

## THE SUN AS AN EMBLEM THAT REPRESENTED GOD

Where this symbolism originated in a historical sense is not difficult to ascertain for, as an ancient cosmologist might state, it is eternally revealed by the nature of the universe itself. With the setting of the Sun then darkness overtook the world and mankind. Bad things happened in the dark. Man was prey in the darkness for hostile tribes, carnivorous animals, poisonous snakes, accidents, coldness; all of which more often than not culminated or could culminate in his death. With the the rebirth of the Sun at sunrise man found his salvation from all the threats listed above; warmth and visible light that pointed out the dangers hidden in the darkness. He no longer was prey for hostile neighbors and vicious animals. Stepping upon poisonous snakes was not as easy and accidents became less often. Photosynthesis promised an abundant food supply. Hunting for meat became easier. Literally the ancients equated the Sun with salvation and life; in reality the Sun was a picture, in form, of the Creator to him.

Plato taught that there is more to the nature of reality than what we can merely touch and see and that there are move levels to creation than can be perceived exclusively through the physical senses. There is a world of of spiritual essences which both inform and animates the physical universe. This animation is seen by man in the form of mathematical and physical laws which underlie the fabric of nature. Ultimately, these laws of the physical universe exist in the world of pure principles (with God). In other words, though "the physical laws" shape the universe, they themselves are not physical, nor do they exist in time or space. They just "are." Interestingly, "they just are" is the ancient philosophical definition of BEING, "that which just is," the level of reality which is not subject to birth, generation, or decay. This is called the realm of God (just being).

According to ancient philosophical and religious teachings, humanity inhabits a world of external appearances, yet also a world of inner understanding. Religion is just one path that man travels from the superficial appearance to true understanding but the movement itself, from appearance to insight, represents the path of initiation. For as the soul progresses along the path of initiation, it attains a greater degree of insight into its own nature, that of the universe, and the laws which govern the creative process. Initiation is a process of awakening, a movement from darkness to light, and ancient philosophy often borrowed metaphors and analogies from the mystery religions when alluding to this process of deepening insight (like being "born again").

According to Plato, who learned most of his knowledge at Heliopolis, the city of the sun in Egypt, the



**upper world** is identified as that of Being, or Eternal Principles, "that which is," while the **lower world** is that of Becoming or Change. Becoming, for Plato, is an "image" of Being yet not the "real" Being (a reflection of the real which is a good way of saying it). Plato acknowledged the divinity of the natural world and the celestial bodies, for he experienced **the universe as a theophany, a manifestation of the divine...the very "image" of the universal principles. In Egypt, where Plato studied, many hundreds of years before Plato, the physical sun had been seen by the learned as a lower manifestation of a higher principle (it represented to them God in the upper world of "being"). Likewise, Plato used the symbol of the Sun to represent a higher principle, itself the source of the physical sun and, indeed, the source of all. For Plato the image of the Sun represented the idea of the One, the Good, and the Beautiful, seen as the source of existence and Being (God).** He learned it from Egypt as you can see. Let us not forget that it is from Egypt we learn monotheism and it would do us good to fully understand the religion of Egypt in order to verify if we are truly following in the legacy of the world's first monotheism.

Following Plato and before the birth of Christianity, the sun came to be regarded as the doorway between the manifest world of nature and the extratemporal world of first principles. Helios represented the heart of the {short description of image} celestial pattern, and his physical aspect was considered as **the theophanic manifestation of a higher principle..the "Solar Logos."** Helios was the all-seeing god of the sun. Helios was depicted as a beardless man crowned with the aureole of the sun and driving a four horse chariot through the sky.



Plato depicted the path of philosophy as an upward "ascent" from the shifting and changing world of appearances to the world of first principles. The philosophical ascent is thus also a movement toward progressively a higher state of cognition.

Plato speaks in depth about the **relationship between the world of Being and the world of Change. The outermost sphere of the stars and the more transcendent sphere behind them, was identified by him as the realm of eternal Being, free from change, and was seen as the habitation of the High God who holds within its Intellect the universal Forms on which all creation is based. The highest sphere clearly corresponds to the nature of the Spiritual Sun, the source of all reality according to Plato.** Below the sphere of the moon, however, all is not so tranquil, for the sublunar sphere is the real of profound change and flux.

Into these realms mankind is thrown; humanity, as a microcosmic reflection of all the principles which comprise the universe, participates in both Being and Change. **Humanity is comprised of a little of both realms (Spirit and Matter). Human beings possess a transcendent spirit capable of knowing eternal principles, while the body is of a transitory nature, destined to dissolve within the confines of space and time.**

Important now for Christians to take note is the fact that many of Plato's ideas about the relation between Being and Change was codified and given expression in a cosmological sense by the teachings of the highly influential Stoic philosopher, Posidonius of Apamea, who flourished circa 161-35 B.C.E. **Coupled with that is the earliest Christian theology which drew much from the speculations of Posidonius of Apamea.** He adds to Plato's ideas his own; namely that the two realms of Being and Change are bound together by the phenomenon of **humanity, which represents the bond [since a mixture of both spirit and matter] between the spiritual and the material, the divine and the terrestrial. Man represents the highest manifestation of the material realm, but the lowest manifestation of the spiritual realm.** Posidonius taught that the second, sublunary world depends upon the upper world for its vital sustenance, the lower world depends upon the lives from the heavenly forces which are poured in to it from the first. Within this presentation of these two realms is also a **concept of the descent of souls** (the pouring into this realm from the realm of Being the very life force in the manner of souls). According to this view the pre-existing soul drinks from from the stream of Forgetfulness and descends into the world of Change through the

planetary spheres, forgetting its celestial origin; through philosophy, however, it can recall its origin in the world of First Principles and regain its seat amongst the stars in the Eternal realm of Being. Posidonius believed the souls come from the sun (a symbol of Life and God), the source for all life, and descend to earth. At death the soul and intellect ascend again and leave the shell of the body behind on the earth. In order to ascend through the heavenly spheres toward liberation and salvation, the initiate needs special knowledge or "gnosis" which is provided by the many anointed ones of God. Jesus was believed to be the revealer of such secret knowledge in the Books of Ieou as well as the Gospel of John. It is through his secret knowledge that was given to his disciples that they would learn what was necessary to make their celestial ascent into the realm of Being. For Plato, the pursuit of philosophy itself was enough to assure the soul's recollection of its origin and ultimate return to its native star. Others taught that necessary was studies in religion in order to purify the eye of the soul for its apprehension of the true Reality. It was through these studies where special knowledge was acquired that the believer comes into intimate contact with the first harmonic principles of creation himself. The early Christian gnostics felt that knowledge, personal experience, and spiritual insight were inherently complementary.

One thing we know for certain is that, in the Pythagorean and Platonic schools of Hellenistic Alexandria, the sun came to be regarded as the doorway [the symbol] linking together the sensible and intelligible spheres, the material and spiritual orders of existence.

*Let us take note that it would be under the influence of such Platonic and Pythagorean Gnostic thought and schools in Alexandria, Egypt, that the Essenes would later alter the messianic concepts of the Hebrew Scriptures (from a human Davidic heir anointed by God into a Son of God...as Cosmic godman)*

Helios [the mediator and link between these two worlds] was seen as the heart of the celestial pattern, and his physical aspect was considered as the lower manifestation of a higher principle which we may characterize as the Idea of the Solar "Logos".

*This concept [lower manifestation of higher principles] was later applied to Jesus [becomes the Solar Logos] as well as his follower saw in him the perfect representation of the realm of Being being manifested before their eyes in the realm of Change in which they lived.*

This is the incarnation of Being which is in every man living in the realm of Change but yet only few reveal within their decaying body the First Principles of the realm of Being [living out in their lives and manifesting for others to see the perfect order of the First Cause....whom we call God].

Let me explain. Not everyone lives a life before God completely surrendered to His Word and Revelation. Jesus, like a few special avatars and specially anointed ones sent from God before Jesus' time, lived and modeled before humanity these principles of the realm of Being...of Heaven.

*John 5:19 19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. (KJV)*

All human beings have this potential within them to live such a life like Jesus is recorded to have lived; according to the Laws and Commandments of God. Most try and succeed in such a task in varying levels. We are to reach toward the goal of "Christ likeness" as modeled by Jesus who lived among men and modeled the perfect order of the First Cause as Plato describes it.



*Phil 3:14 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

Few men live the principles among humanity properly yet the followers of Jesus saw him as such a man. Jesus was understood by many to be the divine manifestation and reflection of the "Logos" yet not literally the "Logos."

## *Jesus is not God!*

But again this manifestation of the "Logos" by Jesus was a daily choice to live the Laws of God whom God, the First Cause, had revealed that find their origin in this realm of Being.

*Let us take just a second to remember what we have learned as the foundation of Egyptian Religion: As Above...So Beneath! Egypt said it first!!!*

The reflection of these principles of Order and Reason was made known to man yet it was man's choice to adopt and mold his life around them. To the degree that humanity did this then to the same degree they manifest the "Logos;" some do better than others. This particular doctrine came to permeate the whole of Hellenistic cosmology in one form or another, influencing scientific, metaphysical, and theological thought. As Franz Cumont observes in his Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans,

From astronomical speculations the Chaldeans had deduced a whole system of religious dogmas. The sun, set in the midst of the superimposed planets, regulates their harmonious movements. As its heat impels them forward, then draws them back, the sun is constantly influencing, according to its various aspects, the direction of their course and their action upon the earth. Fiery heart of the world, it vivifies the whole of this great organism, and as the stars obey its command, it reigns supreme over the universe. The radiance of its splendor illumines the divine immensity of the heavens, but at the same time in its brilliance there is intelligence; it is the origin of all reason, and, as a tireless sower it scatters unceasingly on the world below the seeds of a harvest of souls. Our brief life is but a particular form of the universal life. . . . This coherent and magnificent theology, founded upon the discoveries of ancient astronomy in its zenith, gradually imposed on mankind the cult of the "Invincible Sun" as the master of all nature, creator and preserver of men (Cumont, Astrology And Religion Among The Greeks and Romans, pp. 73-74).

Like God, the sun eternally gives forth from itself without ever being diminished, thus establishing itself as the most perfect symbol of the ineffable First Cause. Yet, as we have noted, among the learned, the sun itself was never taken to represent the First Cause, and was merely seen as its image and manifestation on a lower level of being, within the confines of space and time.

Put another way, the first Sun [God] is the transcendental One, beyond Being [God who is the First Cause]; the second Sun, Helios/Jesus, is the principle of the realm of Being that is being lived out in a human existence, the third level is the realm of all suns, both our local sun and all the other stars in the cosmos. In a poetic sense, however, no one could quarrel with the assertion that the sun is, in a material fashion, the god of the physical universe. Along these lines, the Hermetic writings suggest that one should regard the sun "as the second God, ruling all things, and giving light to all things living in the Cosmos, whether ensouled or unensouled" (Aclepius 29.3, Mead translation, Thrice-Greatest Hermes, II, 229). Likewise, in a scientific sense, few would question the Orphic Hymn to Helios, which identifies the sun as the "the light of life," an epithet which directly parallels the opening lines of the Fourth Gospel.

If the sun can be seen as the material reflection of the First Cause, by analogy the First Cause [realm of Being] can be represented as the Spiritual or Intelligible Sun. This was a symbolic commonplace in the Hellenistic period in pagan, Jewish, and early Christian thought. The

notion is clearly set forth in the important writings of Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish philosopher who sought to reconcile the spiritual traditions of Judaism with the light of Greek learning. Born around 30 B.C.E., Philo describes in his many works a comprehensive worldview based on the central idea of the "Logos". In this emanationist cosmology, Philo refers to God as the Intelligible or Spiritual Sun, and the "Logos", his offspring, as "the Son of God."

*So the "Son of God" is not meant to be understood, in relation to the "Logos," in a literal manner where so and so is the ACTUAL Son of God. Such a concept is to be understood in ONLY an allegorical way where the "Logos" is the Reason and Ordering principle of the Universe seen (the mind of the Divine First Cause or Architect) expressed through the life of a person by adherence to the Laws of the realm of Being (obeying the Laws of God).*

Therefore any reference to a human being, or Jesus for that matter, as being the incarnation of the Logos is to be understood ONLY in an allegorical fashion. Such a one compared to the Logos is just a person totally surrendered to the will of God in this life and who lives these Divine Laws and Divine Principles out before mankind as an example of the Divine Order in Heaven that is to be expressed on earth.

*Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (KJV)*

It is my opinion, and the opinion of many other scholars that the Jesus of the New Testament was such a personification of the Logos of God, but be that as it may, this is NEVER to be understood in LITERAL sense as if a person is the actual Logos himself or God (only one representing the mind of God before mankind). To do so is idolatry and sadly this is Christian tradition since the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. where Jesus was made "God" by a vote of hands.

## LOGOS AND LAW

Philo teaches us something very important. "God is the archetypal paradigm of all Laws: He is the Sun of the sun, God is the intelligible object behind the object comprehensible by sense (the Sun), and from invisible fountains he supplies the visible beams which our eyes behold" (Philo, The Special Laws, 1.279). If we refer to our definition of "Logos" we saw that it referred to Order and these Laws of God, if obeyed, both physical and spiritual, both order life and bring blessing to the believer and those within his influence.

This understanding of the "Logos" as Laws which order the Creation is hidden within every discussion of the Torah and Law as found in the pages of our Old and New Testaments. The Laws of God, which emanated with the First Cause, bring order out of chaos and bring according to our definition of "Logos" a harmony in our world which is again the "image" of the realm of Being (So Above...So Beneath as the Egyptian Priests taught). Said another way out of Law recognized and obeyed in our realm of Change we create a mirror-image of the Realm of Being among us (So Above...So Beneath as the Egyptian Priests taught). We create a little Heaven earth to the degree we acknowledge and observe and adhere to the Laws of Being given to humanity by this First Cause we call God (when we obey the Laws/Torah of God). When one looks at the Torah and Ethical Monotheism then it is easy to see how God desires harmony between both realms of Being and Change (So Above...So Beneath) and that harmony and unity can come only through humanity's acknowledgment and awareness of the "Logos" within in themselves and their



**surrender to it and it's will for their lives** which is the pattern from above that resides in hearts and minds of every man and woman to have ever taken a breath; in other words....all mankind). Jesus had no monopoly on the Logos; only he surrendered to the will of the Logos better than most.

## THE LOGOS AS THE DIVINE EXPRESSION OF THE FIRST CAUSE AND HIS WILL

**Philo had many titles for the "Logos":**

- Angel
- First-born
- First-born Son
- Image of God
- Mediator
- Name of God
- Second God

**This theology, which is independently found in the Egyptian Hermetica from the same time period and the writings of Plutarch, was chosen by the first Christian intellectuals as the vehicle for their own spiritual expression.** As an expositor of the "Logos" doctrine, Philo's writings are appropriately filled with hundreds of examples of number symbolism, for Number was seen as an **ordering principle** at work in the cosmos; Number is thus allied with the ordering principle of "Logos", which was also studied in a mathematical sense. For this reason, in one revealing passage, Clement of Alexandria refers to his predecessor as simply Philo "the Pythagorean." Early Christians were themselves interested in the scientific portrayal of the "Logos", which they expressed through the numerical language of Greek gematria.

Despite his prolific output, Philo was a synthesizer and not an "original thinker," and the value of his work resides in this simple fact. While learned in the traditions of the day, the ideas and symbolism which Philo employs were "in the air," and he was not an innovator; as one scholar notes, "anything philosophical to be found in his writings can confidently be taken as genuine teaching of his environment." In this respect, Philo's work sheds an especially important light on the ancient "Logos" teaching, for it is possible to infer from his writings, and those of his contemporaries, the central patterns of Hellenistic cosmology.

## THE LOGOS TEACHING

***the "Logos" is God's Likeness, by whom the whole kosmos was fashioned.-  
Philo Judaeus***

***We speak of God, of the Son [Logos], his Word, and of the holy Spirit; and we say that the Father, the Son [Logos], and the Spirit are united in power. For the Son [Logos] is the intelligence, reason, and wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit is an effluence, as light from fire. In the same way we recognize that there are other powers which surround matter and pervade it.-  
Athenagoras, early Christian apologist***

In Hellenistic cosmology, the First Cause [God] was envisioned as transcending human understanding. In the **Republic**, Plato suggested that it was even "beyond Being," a notion which was to have considerable influence

for well over a millennium. The Pythagoreans portrayed the first principle as the **Monad**, indicating that it is both a primeval Unity and apart (*monas*) from all other things, transcending time, space, and the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. As Clement of Alexander succinctly notes, "The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name and conception" (Clement of Alexander, Stromata, 5.11; in *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, II, 461). While all things have a relation to it, this primeval Source (*archê*) was never envisioned as a "personal God," or as a thinking and planning divinity like YHWH, the God of the Old Testament, who consciously decided to create the universe. For the Greeks, the Supreme Principle is utterly simple, and superior to conscious thought and decision-making, even though it is symbolically identified with the power of Cosmic Mind in some writings.

As Origen notes, "The Word can also be 'the Son' because he announces the secrets of the Father, who is 'Mind' (Nous) analogous to the Son who is called 'Word' (Logos). For as the word (Logos=Reason) in us is the messenger of what the mind perceives, so the Word of God, since he has known the Father, reveals the Father whom he has known, because no creature can come into contact with him without a guide" (Commentary on John 1.278). When reading these Hellenistic texts of the early Church Fathers it is important to remember that Nous or Mind on a cosmological level represents the principle of pure Intelligence [God] itself and is superior to the activity of discursive reasoning, mental analysis, etc. Therefore, God can be pure Mind without engaging in inferior activities such as thinking, planning, and decision making; nonetheless, it is through the cultivation of divine Logos in the human soul that we are led upward toward the recognition of the Highest. This path requires study, meditation, and prayer upon the things revealed by the First Cause to this realm of Change.

Because of its abundant perfection, the Source [First Cause in the Realm of Being] unconditionally gives forth a secondary principle, the "Logos", in the same way that the sun gives forth rays of light. Now we need to better understand how the Sun was the picture of the Logos. The "Logos" is not the First Cause, any more than rays of light "are" the sun, but nonetheless the two are very intimately related. In this ancient teaching, the "Logos" is the first, harmonically differentiated "image" of the First Cause. The "Logos" represents the first level of real manifestation or Being made visible in our realm of Change through the actions of humanity, for it encompasses within itself all the laws and relations which are later articulated in the phenomenal universe. Since the "Logos" is the emanation of the Transcendent Absolute, it may be poetically described as "the Son of God" [NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE LITERAL SON OF GOD], as we see in the works of Philo, the Hermetic writings of Egypt, and early Christianity. Underlying the source of all reality, the "Logos" is related to the principle of Nous or Universal Intellect, the "repository" of all the cosmic Forms and principles on which creation is based. And as the rational image of Divine Intellect, humanity is itself the living, incarnate image of the "Logos." Notice I said "humanity" and not just one person. Again we see that humanity reflects this "Logos." Some men and women who observe and manifest the Order of the realm of Being as expressed in the Laws of the realm of Being exert a Heavenly effect upon this realm of Change. Jesus was believed to be one of the best examples of this by his followers and those who knew him best. This does not make Jesus God however; only very Godly. Said another way, Jesus revealed God the Father to men like few could. This again does not make him God or should make him the object of worship. When such was done later by those who either went to far or failed to grasp the true understanding of the "Logos" then idolatry and blasphemy results from the failure to understand properly the "Logos" doctrine as expressed in the Gospel of John and the writings of men like Plato and Philo.

According to Clement of Alexandria,

*the image of God is His Word [Logos], the genuine Son of Mind, the Divine Word, the archetypal light of light; and the image of the Word is the true man, the mind which is in man, who is therefore said to have been made "in the image and likeness of God" (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to*



*the Greeks 10, Ante-Nicene Fathers, II, 199).*

Let me say it very plainly. The Divine Will of the Creator in the realm of Being above which is the will of the First Cause, is related to man in this earth [the realm of change] by the "Logos" which is the mind of God which is within every man and woman. This will of the Creator/Father can be discerned if they listen to the still small voice within or seek it themselves through study, prayer, and meditation upon the things of God expressed through His Laws. This will of God exists within humanity and the hearts of mankind and emerges to control humanity when mankind sets his heart upon the things above and seeks God and tunes his heart and mind upon the things of God.

Invariably, the powers of Light and Life were associated with the nature of the "Logos" in Hellenistic thought, for these are among the most central principles in all of creation. Like the early Christians, the pagan cosmologists held that humanity was created in the "image" of God. To illustrate this, the Hermetic writings of Egypt present several schemes; in one of the more attractive versions, Eternity (Aeon) is said to be the image of God, Cosmos is the image of Eternity, the Sun is the image of Cosmos, and Man is the image of the Sun.' Because of these factors, the "Logos" has often been pictured in various cosmologies as Anthropos, the figure of the Perfect Man, the archetype and exemplar of humanity. As said before, those who knew Jesus best knew him to be the best that humanity and Judaism had to offer. He above all others lived the Torah and the Laws of God [the First Cause] better than any other [in their opinion]. Such Ordering Principles of Life expressed through God's Laws was not only his message but his life-style. Few if any exhibited such a pattern of the Divine among his fellow men. That is why Jesus is the Avatar of the Jewish nation and recognized such by his disciples and apostles and presented to the world in such a manner by those who knew him best.

*But again Jesus as the Son of God [Logos] is to be understood in an allegorical manner and not a literal manner and worship is to be given to the First Cause and not the "Logos" manifested in different degrees within mankind; even Jesus!*

## THE LOGOS AS HARMONY

The nature of the "Logos" was also represented by the natural principle of musical harmony. Mathematically, harmony depends upon the nature of "Logos" or ratio. Both pagans and Christians alike expressed the nature of the "Logos" in these terms, for it is through the power of harmony that all the parts of creation are reconciled into a greater whole. Harmony on earth, the realm of Change, is to be manifested when the principles of Heaven are lived out by humanity.

Let us think for a moment. God demand sole worship. When we worship another, even with good intentions but unknowingly we are doing wrong and we are not aware of it, we bring disharmony and not harmony. We bring disorder and not order. When humanity suffers it manifest disharmony and disorder. When we feed the poor we bring harmony and order to bear upon disorder and disharmony. When we clothe the naked we bring order and harmony to disharmony and disorder. When we move a landmark of our neighbor we bring disharmony and disorder and not harmony. In so doing one often ends up killed and this furthers the disorder and disharmony. All the Commandments of God, both positive and negative, are the Absolute expressions of the will of the Divine Creator. We call Him God. The Laws and Commandments of the Divine Realm not only express the will of God but are manifestations of the greatest Love and Order that emanates from the Divine Realm of Being [THINK]! When humanity takes upon themselves to adhere to and observe such Laws and Commandments then the Order of Heaven and the Harmony that is Heaven exerts it's influence upon this latter realm of Change. In this way the Mind of God is [Logos] is applied by mankind to the realm of matter where humanity finds its home. Then and only then does this passage find its fulfillment:

***Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
(KJV)***

That says it all. From this we can also surmise that the early Christian ideal of the *church* or assembly (*ekklêsia*), the mystical body of Christ, was itself seen by some as a social manifestation of the celestial harmony, whereby all individuals might be unified and uplifted into a greater whole (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to the Greeks 9, Witt translation, "Plotinus and Posidonius," 201).

## THE PROLOGUE TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Having surveyed some common ideas regarding the "Logos" during the Hellenistic period, it would be useful to study the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel to see how it relates to this model. It is reproduced below, where the terms *Word* and *world* have been replaced with the Greek originals, "*Logos*" and *kosmos* respectively:

John 1:1-18 1 In the beginning was the **Logos**, and the **Logos** was with God, and the **Logos** was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the **kosmos**. 10 He was in the **kosmos**, and the **kosmos** was made by him, and the **kosmos** knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the **Logos** was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (KJV)

It is easy to see how the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel reflects the ideas of the Hellenistic "Logos" teaching, set forth here in its Christian version. The "Logos" is in the *archê*, the Beginning, Source, or Fount of existence. As the underlying harmonic pattern of creation, all things were made through the "Logos", which contains the principles of Life and Light. The light of the "Logos" shines out, illuminating the darkness of matter, forgetfulness, and our unawakened spiritual nature, yet "the darkness" grasps it not: the darkness cannot understand the Light, nor can it destroy it. But by turning back toward the "Logos" and the world of first principles, humanity discovers what it means to truly live, and is illuminated by the spiritual source of creation.

John the Baptizer is perhaps a member of an Essene community and he bears witness concerning the Light. The **kosmos** itself is a reflection of the "Logos", which exists here-and-now in the manifest world through order. This "order" is best understood by the obedience to the will and Commandments and Laws of God; yet, without the power of Mind-the power of Light-the created world is unaware of the higher realities, even though it mirrors them. That explains the message of John the Baptist who came preaching repentance and and turning back toward God and the will of God as found in the Torah. The "Logos" came unto its own, humanity [the Logos resides within each man], but not everyone recognized its nature. Yet those who received the "Logos", "the dayspring from on high," and believed in its divine name, experienced a spiritual regeneration-referred to elsewhere in this gospel as "the birth from above"-and, like the "Logos" itself, **became Sons of God.** This passage is not saying, I reiterate is not saying, that those who believed in Jesus or the theology created about him later by Rome is "born from above" or "becomes a son of God." Again we must remember to understand this metaphorically and not literally



as Rome has tragically not done for thousands of years. As shared above some experiences this awakening to the Spiritual realities that exist among us in this realm of Change better than others; thus the call of repentance to the multitudes. Those who had experienced such an awakening to the spiritual realm were the anointed ones calling the masses to turn their hearts unto their fathers of the faith. Understand that if Israel repented and submitted to the rule and reign of God and His principles of Order and Harmony over their lives then the rule and reign and kingship of God would be over their lives and then this world would become the very image of the realm of Being (Heaven would come to earth). The Kingdom of God would be manifested in our realm of Change and truly the Kingdom of God would be a reality; Heaven would come to Earth (the Realm of Being would overtake the Realm of Change).

## THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

We learned earlier that the "Logos" is part of every person and that to the degree a person surrenders to the rule and reign of the Mind of God in their lives the "Logos" becomes manifested in the life and actions of that person. Throughout history we find examples of Godly people who stood head and shoulders above their contemporaries. Righteous examples or "avatars" can be found in almost every nation of the world if one examines the history of various nations. The Jesus of the New Testament was such an avatar and righteous one of whom I speak. Those who knew him best understood that in him and his life was the purest manifestation of God and His rule that could be found within humanity.

That being so the we can now properly understand how the "Logos" was made flesh within the lives of these people as it became incarnate in the universe via the principle of Humanity and was "manifest" among mankind. This concept must be understood in an allegorical and not a literal manner in order to avoid pagan idolatry. Failure to understand the "Logos" doctrine correctly as shared in this article has rendered billions as idolators and blasphemers in the history of the world in the last two thousand years. This word, *manifest*, is usually translated as "dwelt." But the original Greek term is ambiguous and means, literally, "tented" or "tabernacled," referring to the tent in which the tablets of the Mosaic Law were kept.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you again notice the reference to Law in that verse? Is this coincidence or is Law one of the main manifestation of the Divine Mind of the Logos?

The meaning here is that the revelation of the New Law, the "Logos", has now been made manifest among humanity as was the Law of old. The old Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth come through the "Logos", Jesus the Christ, the anointed one who manifested this "new law." According to some early Christians, the human Jesus became the vehicle for the Divine "Logos" only at his baptism by John, signified by the descent of the dove [the doctrine of adoptionism], while developing orthodoxy decided that he had been the incarnation of the "Logos" from the start [pre-existence]. In other words either Jesus received the descending "Logos" because He, the Logos, could tabernacle within such a holy temple and body surrendered to the will of God as Jesus was or either Jesus was born with the Logos fully dwelling within him. Theology will debate this for centuries and the result is that they make Jesus God instead of man anointed by God with the Logos which is actually the truth; but Rome desiring to pattern Jesus after their pagan g-ds and g-dmen will do otherwise. This was done in 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicea when Jesus was made God! Idolatry has infected almost every believer since!

No one has at any time seen the ineffable, High God. But the only-begotten Son-the "Logos"-who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed to humanity the nature of the transcendent Source, both through consciousness-the Light of Life (Luke 178) and through the structure of the universe itself. Understand this "Light of Life" is either manifested through our Godly actions in which we imitate God or not. Some do this better than others and Jesus was one who was recognized among his followers as one who portrayed this Divine image through his surrender to the Torah better than most in his day. Jesus and his obedience to the

Torah and the will of God in his life as well as his teaching of such principles among his people revealed to humanity the very nature of this transcendent Source we call God. This revelation is grasped by too few and expressed through one's life by fewer still. There are many such men who line the halls of history who were like Jesus in this manner and history records such great men like Rama, Moses and Yeshua who were manifestations among men of the Divine Logos in human form; again however this is to be understood allegorically and not literally.

## THE LOGOS PERSONIFIED

While the early Christians personified the "Logos" in the figure of Jesus, the Greeks had represented the "Logos" in the figure of Apollo, the g-d of geometry and music. Another favorite representation was Hermes, who, as the church fathers acknowledge, was actually called "the "Logos"" by the Greeks. Many great men were known to have brought Divine wisdom to bear upon this world and were considered as representations of the Logos among mankind. Jesus was not the first; nor the last. Thus Justin Martyr writes:

*"When we say, as before, that he [Jesus] was begotten by God as the Word of God in a unique manner beyond the ordinary birth, this should be no strange thing for you who speak of Hermes as the announcing word [Logos] from God" (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 22; in Richardson, Early Christian Fathers, 256).*

For example, according to the gnostic sect of the Naassenes, "Hermes is the Word who has expressed and fashioned the things that have been, that are and that will be" (Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies 5.2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 50); translation by Doresse, Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics, 84).

In ancient Egypt, where the "Logos" theology appears at an early date, the Greek g-d Hermes was identified with the Egyptian divinity Thoth. Thoth was the personification of the universal order, the "heart and tongue" of the sun g-d Ra who "spoke the words" which resulted in the creation of the heavens and the earth. According to Iamblichus, Thoth was the author of 36,525 books (equal to the number of days in one hundred solar years). He was represented as the "scribe of the gods," the revealer of mathematics, geometry, and priestly knowledge. As E. A. Wallis Budge points out:

*His knowledge and powers of calculation measured out the heavens, and planned the earth, and everything which is in them; his will and power kept the forces in heaven and earth in equilibrium; it was his great skill in celestial mathematics which made proper use of the laws (maāt) upon which the foundation and maintenance of the universe rested; it was he who directed the motions of the heavenly bodies and their times and seasons; and without his words the gods, whose existence depended on them, could not have kept their place among the followers of Ra (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians I, 407-408).*

As "the reason and mental powers" of the sun g-d Ra, Thoth was "also the means by which their will was translated into speech" (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians I, 407). As the revealer of celestial knowledge, the attributes of Thoth are later reflected in the figure Hermes Trismegistos (Thrice-Great Hermes), the reputed author of the Egyptian Hermetic writings. While the actual authors of these important works are unknown, like the unknown authors of the Christian gospels, Iamblichus repeats the tradition that "Hermes, the g-d who presides over language, was formerly very properly considered as common to all priests; and the power who presides over the true science concerning the gods is one and the same in the whole of things. Hence our ancestors dedicated the inventions of their wisdom to this deity, inscribing all their own writings with the name of Hermes" [Iamblichus, On The Mysteries 1.1 (Taylor translation, 17-18)].



## THE LOGOS AND THE HERMETIC WRITINGS

The Greek Hermetic tractates were written and used in Egypt during a period stretching from perhaps 100 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. by members of Hermetic spiritual communities which were active in synthesizing native Egyptian teachings with the expressions of Greek philosophy. The ideas of this "pagan gnosticism" were certainly "in the air" during the formative days of early Christianity, and while "no direct literary relationship can be traced. . . it seems clear that [the person who wrote the Gospel of] John was working with similar presuppositions and along similar lines to those of the Hermetic authors" (C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John*, 31).

The Hermetic writings are cast as revelation discourses between Hermes Trismegistos, the spiritual "father," and Tat, his "son," the aspiring initiate. In an esoteric sense, "Hermes" and "Tat" may represent two aspects of an individual's soul, the higher and lower natures respectively. Through "his" writings and discourse with his disciples, Hermes Trismegistos reveals teachings of a spiritual and cosmological nature, concerning the nature of God, the soul, the origin and structure of the cosmos, and the path through which the soul may experience its divinizing rebirth in the divine principle of Mind or *Nous*. Common to all of these writings are parallels to the Hellenistic "Logos" doctrine as it has been summarized in this article.

According to the underlying myth of Gnosis, humanity is asleep, forgetful of its celestial origin and true nature. It is the task of the "Gnostic Revealer" [as the manifestation of the Logos] to descend through the heavenly spheres and fan the slumbering sparks of spiritual knowledge which lie dormant within the soul, leading to the recognition of one's authentic nature and spiritual destiny. In Christianity, Jesus is personified as the Gnostic Revealer, the teacher of saving knowledge, especially in such works as the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas. But understand history records many of these Gnostic Revelers of God which expressed among mankind the Logos better than their peers and Jesus is not the only one nor the last of them. In the Hermetic writings, Hermes Trismegistos represents another Hellenistic manifestation of the "Logos", also personified as the Gnostic Revealer. Understand what personification means: a picture of the real but not the actual "real." While one may have many teachers in life, Clement of Alexandria states that the ultimate spiritual teacher is the "Logos" itself, "the Teacher from whom all instruction comes" [Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks II* (Anti-Nicene Fathers, II, 203)]. According to the ancients, the "Logos" exists without, yet also within. We can never be separated from the harmony of the universe because we are its living reflection, even if in our slumber, this recognition has been temporarily obscured.

Like the teachings of the early Christians, the Hermetic writings focus upon the mystery of the soul's "rebirth" and transfiguration, the discovery of "the inner man," which results in a divinization of the personality. Through this existential realization, the gnostic-the true initiate-discovers who he is, where he has been, and where he is going. The gnostic realization is that awakened, transfigured humanity is a manifestation of *Nous*, the Divine Intellect, the first emanation of the unknowable Source. Simply said we become "sons of God." In one of the Hermetic writings, The Cup or the Monad, the story is told of how the world creator, while giving each person a share of reason (*logos*), did not bestow on every soul an equal portion of Mind. Rather, Mind was "set up in the midst of souls, just as it it were a prize" [*Corpus Hermeticum* 4 (The Cup of Monad), 3 (Mead translation, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, II, 56)]. In language which strongly parallels that of early Christianity, Hermes explains the liberating baptism in the Cup of Mind. The world creator, he says

*filled a mighty cup with it, and sent it down, joining a Herald to it, to whom He gave command to make this proclamation to the hearts of men: Baptize thyself with this Cup's baptism, what heart can do so; you who have faith can ascend to Him who sent down the cup, you who know why you have come into being! As many then as understood the Herald's tidings and doused themselves in Mind, became partakers in the Gnosis; and when they had "received the Mind" they were made "perfect*



*men." But they who do not understand the tidings, these, since they possess the aid of Reason ("Logos") only and not Mind (Nous), are ignorant of why and how they have come into being [Corpus Hermeticum 13 (Mead translation, Thrice-Greatest Hermes, II, 57)].*

Elsewhere, in another work, The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth, Hermes explains the process through which this divinization is experienced. Recalling the passage in the Fourth Gospel where Nicodemus asks, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*, Tat proclaims *"I know not, thrice-greatest one, from what womb a man can be born again, nor from what seed"* [Corpus Hermeticum 13 (The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth), 1 (Scott translation, Hermetica, I, 239)].

**Answer for yourself:** Do you see this similarity between the Gospel of John and the Hermetic writings?

Hermes explains that the womb of rebirth is Wisdom and that the Will of God is the begetter. The mystery of rebirth produces the race of the Divine Sonship; this cannot be taught, but, when the time is right, God recalls the knowledge of the spiritual realities to one's awareness, the knowledge the soul possessed before being born into a body. As Walter Scott summarizes the teaching of this tractate:

*The man whom the Rebirth brings into being is a son of God; he belongs to the world of Mind; he is composed of divine Powers. He who has been born again has become an incorporeal being; he is no longer a thing visible to bodily eyes.... He sees things no longer by bodily sense; he sees with the eye of Mind. And thus seeing, he finds himself to be one with all that exists; he feels himself to be omnipresent and eternal. The new self which has thus come into being is imperishable. He who has once become a g-d, and son of God, can never cease to be that which he has become (Scott, Hermetica, II, 372).*

In this ecstatic, transcendent state, both Christian and Hermetic mystics entered into divine union with the "Logos", the Divine Intellect, the source of Life and Light. Contrary to what you have been taught the key Pauline phrase "in Christ" does not mean in union with a man (Jesus) but union with the Divine Intellect. This union does not come, as the Pagans or Rome would later teach though the eating of the God in the form or wafers or drinking the blood of God which we find in communion in our churches today. Hopefully you see the difference that this union with the Divine intellect comes through knowledge of the Divine, His Word, and your surrender to it in you life and your actions. Instructed by the "Logos" itself, then we become its mouthpiece. Doing so then we understand that the ancients who understood these principles could thus honestly proclaim that the realizations they experienced were the direct teachings of Christ or Hermes. It is no doubt from such ecstatic, heightened states of consciousness that many of the inspired logia or "sayings of the Lord" originated that later found their way into the early Christian literature. That is why Jesus-the "Logos" personified as the "Gnostic Revealer"-can accurately say in the Gospel of Thomas, *"He who will drink from My [the Logos speaking of Himself] mouth will become like Me. I [the Logos] myself shall become he [one man in purpose and will], and the things that are hidden [in the Spirit realm] will be revealed to him [mankind]"* [Gospel of Thomas 108 (in Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library, 137)].

Generally speaking, the ancient gnostics primarily viewed Christ as an eternal, celestial power, the "Logos", with which it is possible to have an intimate, personal relation, since our higher consciousness is made in its image. For this reason, gnostics stressed the experiential union with the divine, and showed little interest in the historical Jesus, whom it has always been impossible to know in a concrete sense, or even accurately in a historical sense. Because of this, gnostic speculation has always possessed a very strong ahistorical, cosmological tendency and dimension, preferring to concentrate on the liberating realization of Christ within.



This realization, of which the mystics speak, is the secret of initiation, and was referred to by the early Christians in a number of ways. The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel makes it clear that those who "received" the "Logos" experienced a divinizing energy, thus "becoming Sons of God," a transformation also referred to in the Hermetic writings. Elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, this is referred to in Greek as "the birth from above" (John. 3:3).

*John 3:3 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

Origen, in his work Against Celsus, states that those who follow the example of "the **Sun** of Righteousness," who sent forth His rays from Judaea, become not only followers of Christ, but Christs in their own right. An even more appealing analogy is offered by Clement, who writes that not even the sun can show us the true God. That is because:

*The healthful Word or Reason, who is the Sun of the soul, alone can do that; through Him alone, when He has risen within in the depth of the mind, the soul's eye is illuminated (Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 6 (Loeb Classical Library translation, 155).*

## THE LOGOS AS MEDIATOR

One of the primary roles of the "Logos" in Greek thought is its function as celestial mediator, the "geometric mean" between extremes. That is why Jesus proclaims, in the Gospel of John when speaking of the Logos:, "I am the Way" and "I am the Door." He never meant to say as the Catholic Church would later fashion that only though accepted orthodox beliefs and religious doctrines ABOUT himself (Jesus), which were to be created later by Rome concerning him, was one to be "saved." As the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel states, "No one has at any time seen God." However, "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." Jesus in his actions and words modeled the thoughts of God and applied them to his life as few did in his day. Simply said Jesus imitated the God he knew as expressed to him through the Logos that dwelled within him. This did not make Jesus the same as God or God in the flesh in a literal sense but only in an allegorical sense as he lived "Godly" among his people. We need do the same. We need let the logos be expressed in our lives by surrendering to the will of God in our lives. Not only is the "Logos" the image and manifestation of the otherwise transcendent Source, but it is the connecting principle through which we are joined back to the One, and that is why Jesus is represented as the mediator between heaven and earth in Christian symbolism. Again not literally as we have come to believe in error, but as the expression of the Divine Logos among men as the ultimate example of a Godly life. To the degree we live and surrender to the will of God we like Jesus let the Logos, the manifestation of this transcendent Source, life in and through us. The Kingdom of God goes then where we go.

As Christianity evolved into a collective belief system, it developed a political structure and creeds, teaching that Jesus came and left at a particular point in time, and that it was only possible to achieve salvation by joining the ranks of the organized church. The Catholic Church taught that there was no salvation outside of the Bishop! At the same, it outlawed other forms of religious expression, and confiscated the property of prominent individuals who resisted conversion to the new faith. This of course guaranteed the success of Christianity. The church thereby proclaimed itself the official mediator between man and God, thus usurping the original function of Christ the "Logos". The Catholic Church now took the role of the Logos which God put in every man! However, according to the gnostic approach, the "Logos" is an ever-present celestial power, not limited by time, space, or political boundaries; nor to a single appearance only in one man as Christianity teaches concerning Jesus. It underlies the structure of the universe and

consciousness, and, for those attuned to its nature, the "Logos" illuminates the inner recesses of the heart with eternal, spiritual knowledge. That is why Jesus, in the ancient Gospel of Thomas, can accurately say as speaking of the Logos: *"It is I [the Logos] who am the light which is above them all. It is I [the Logos] who am the All. From Me [the Logos] did the All come forth, and unto Me [the Logos] did the All extend. Split a piece of wood and I am there."*

*Now you know the truth about the Logos.....which is only to be understood as allegory of the Divine Intelligence of the Creator that inhabits every man [Gospel of Thomas 77 (in Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library, 135)]*





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# THE "LOGOS" AS THE DIVINE EXPRESSION OF THE FIRST CAUSE AND HIS WILL

Philo had many titles for the "Logos":

- Angel
- First-born
- First-born Son
- Image of God
- Mediator
- Name of God
- Second God

This theology, which is independently found in the Egyptian Hermetica from the same time period and the writings of Plutarch, was chosen by the first Christian intellectuals as the vehicle for their own spiritual expression. As an expositor of the "Logos" doctrine, Philo's writings are appropriately filled with hundreds of examples of number symbolism, for Number was seen as an ordering principle at work in the cosmos; Number is thus allied with the ordering principle of "Logos", which was also studied in a mathematical sense. For this reason, in one revealing passage, Clement of Alexandria refers to his predecessor as simply Philo "the Pythagorean." Early Christians were themselves interested in the scientific portrayal of the "Logos", which they expressed through the numerical language of Greek gematria.

Despite his prolific output, Philo was a synthesizer and not an "original thinker," and the value of his work resides in this simple fact. While learned in the traditions of the day, the ideas and symbolism which Philo employs were "in the air," and he was not an innovator; as one scholar notes, "anything philosophical to be found in his writings can confidently be taken as genuine teaching of his environment." In this respect, Philo's work sheds an especially important light on the ancient "Logos" teaching, for it is possible to infer from his writings, and those of his contemporaries, the central patterns of Hellenistic cosmology.

## THE LOGOS TEACHING

*the "Logos" is God's Likeness, by whom the whole kosmos was fashioned.-  
Philo Judaeus*

*We speak of God, of the Son [Logos], his Word, and of the holy Spirit; and we say that the Father, the Son [Logos], and the Spirit are united in power. For the Son [Logos] is the intelligence, reason, and wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit is an effluence, as light from fire. In the same way we*

## *recognize that there are other powers which surround matter and pervade it.- Athenagoras, early Christian apologist*

In Hellenistic cosmology, the First Cause [God] was envisioned as transcending human understanding. In the Republic, Plato suggested that it was even "beyond Being," a notion which was to have considerable influence for well over a millennium. The Pythagoreans portrayed the first principle as the **Monad**, indicating that it is both a primeval Unity and apart (*monas*) from all other things, transcending time, space, and the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. As Clement of Alexander succinctly notes, "The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name and conception" (Clement of Alexander, Stromata, 5.11; in Ante-Nicean Fathers, II, 461). While all things have a relation to it, this primeval Source (archê) was never envisioned as a "personal God," or as a thinking and planning divinity like YHWH, the God of the Old Testament, who consciously decided to create the universe. For the Greeks, the Supreme Principle is utterly simple, and superior to conscious thought and decision-making, even though it is symbolically identified with the power of Cosmic Mind in some writings.

As Origen notes, "The Word can also be 'the Son' because he announces the secrets of the Father, who is 'Mind' (Nous) analogous to the Son who is called 'Word' (Logos). For as the word (Logos=Reason) in us is the messenger of what the mind perceives, so the Word of God, since he has known the Father, reveals the Father whom he has known, because no creature can come into contact with him without a guide" (Origen, Commentary on John 1.278). When reading these Hellenistic texts of the early Church Fathers it is important to remember that Nous or Mind on a cosmological level represents the principle of pure Intelligence [God] itself and is superior to the activity of discursive reasoning, mental analysis, etc. Therefore, God can be pure Mind without engaging in inferior activities such as thinking, planning, and decision making; nonetheless, it is through the cultivation of divine Logos in the human soul that we are led upward toward the recognition of the Highest. This path requires study, meditation, and prayer upon the things revealed by the First Cause to this realm of Change.

## **THE SUN AS A PICTURE OF THE LOGOS**

Because of its abundant perfection, the Source [First Cause in the Realm of Being] unconditionally gives forth a secondary principle, the "Logos", in the same way that the sun gives forth rays of light. Now we need to better understand how the Sun was the picture of the Logos. The "Logos" is not the First Cause, any more than rays of light "are" the sun, but nonetheless the two are very intimately related.

In this ancient teaching, the "Logos" is the first, harmonically differentiated "image" of the First Cause (God). The "Logos" represents the first level of the real manifestation of the realm of Being that is made visible in our realm of Change and this is done through the actions of humanity, for it encompasses within itself all the laws and relations which are later articulated in the phenomenal universe. Since the "Logos" is the emanation of the Transcendent Absolute (God), then the Logos may be poetically and allegorically be described as "the Son of God" [NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE LITERAL SON OF GOD], as we see in the works of Philo, the Hermetic writings of Egypt, and early Christianity.

*Again that means that any application of the "Logos" to Jesus must be understood only in an allegorical sense and not a literal sense; Jesus is not God!*

Underlying the source of all reality, the "Logos" is related to the principle of Nous [Mind] or Universal



Intellect, the "repository" of all the cosmic Forms and principles on which creation is based. And the "Logos," as the rational image of Divine Intellect, dwells within all humanity in the form of billions of incarnated images of this "Logos." Notice I said "humanity" and not just one person. Again we see that the goal of all humanity is to reflect and manifest this "Logos" in this world. Some men and women who observe and manifest the Order of the realm of Being as expressed in the Laws of the realm of Being exert a Heavenly effect upon this realm of Change through their obedience to these Laws of God.

*Matt 5:17-19 17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)*

Jesus was believed to be one of the best examples of this manifestation of the Divine "Logos" among men as recognized by his followers and those who knew him best. This does not make Jesus God however; only very Godly. Said another way, Jesus revealed God the Father to men like few could.

*John 14:9 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (KJV)*

Simply said Jesus was living a totally surrendered life to the will of God and His Laws that in an allegorical way one could look upon Jesus and the works (obedience to Laws and Commandments of God) and symbolically see God among men.

*John 14:10 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (KJV)*

I would hope you can look at the above passage and see clearly now how that part of the Father that was in Jesus was only the "Logos" to which Jesus was surrendered; in a way surrendered to the will and principles of Heaven more than others around whom he lived. That is why he stood out among men.

Again this is not ever to be taken as if literal for to do such renders one an idolator and sadly this has become the very foundation of Gentile Christianity.

This again does not make him God or should make him the object of worship. When such was done later by those who either went to far or failed to grasp the true understanding of the "Logos" then idolatry and blasphemy results from the failure to understand properly the "Logos" doctrine as expressed in the Gospel of John and the writings of men like Plato and Philo.

According to Clement of Alexandria,

*the image of God is His Word [Logos], the genuine Son of Mind, the Divine Word, the archetypal light of light; and the image of the Word is the true man, the mind which is in man, who is therefore said to have been made "in the image and likeness of God" (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to the Greeks 10, Ante-Nicene Fathers, II, 199).*

Let me say it very plainly. The Divine Will of the Creator in the realm of Being above which is the will of

the First Cause, is related to man in this earth [the realm of change] by the "Logos" which is the mind of God which is within every man and woman. This will of the Creator/Father can be discerned if they listen to the still small voice within or seek it themselves through study, prayer, and meditation upon the things of God expressed through His Laws. This will of God exists within humanity and the hearts of mankind and emerges to control humanity when mankind sets his heart upon the things above and seeks God and tunes his heart and mind upon the things of God (So Above...So Beneath).

Invariably, the powers of Light and Life were associated with the nature of the "Logos" in Hellenistic thought, for these are among the most central principles in all of creation. Like the early Christians, the pagan cosmologists held that humanity was created in the "image" of God. To illustrate this, the Hermetic writings of Egypt present several schemes; in one of the more attractive versions, Eternity (Aeon) is said to be the image of God, Cosmos is the image of Eternity, the Sun is the image of Cosmos, and Man is the image of the Sun.' Because of these factors, the "Logos" has often been pictured in various cosmologies as Anthropos, the figure of the Perfect Man, the archetype and exemplar of humanity. As said before, those who knew Jesus best knew him to be the best that humanity and Judaism had to offer. He above all others lived the Torah and the Laws of God [the First Cause] better than any other [in their opinion]. Such Ordering Principles of Life expressed through God's Laws was not only his message but his life-style. Few if any exhibited such a pattern of the Divine among his fellow men. That is why Jesus is the Avatar of the Jewish nation and recognized such by his disciples and apostles and presented to the world in such a manner by those who knew him best.

*But again Jesus as the Son of God [Logos] is to be understood in an allegorical manner and not a literal manner and worship is to be given to the First Cause and not the "Logos" manifested in different degrees within mankind; even Jesus!*





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## THE "LOGOS" AS HARMONY

The nature of the "Logos" was also represented by the natural principle of musical harmony.

Mathematically, harmony depends upon the nature of "Logos" or ratio. Both pagans and Christians alike expressed the nature of the "Logos" in these terms, for it is through the power of harmony that all the parts of creation are reconciled into a greater whole. Harmony on earth, the realm of Change, is to be manifested when the principles of Heaven, the realm of Being, are lived out by humanity.

Let us think for a moment. God demand sole worship. When we worship another, even with good intentions (Jesus) but unknowingly we are doing wrong and we are not aware of it, we bring disharmony and not harmony. We bring disorder and not order; ironically just the reverse of the will of the "Logos." When humanity suffers it manifest disharmony and disorder. When we feed the poor we bring harmony and order to bear upon disorder and disharmony. When we clothe the naked we bring order and harmony to disharmony and disorder. When we move a landmark of our neighbor we bring disharmony and disorder and not harmony. In so doing one often ends up killed and this furthers the disorder and disharmony. All the Commandments of God, both positive and negative, are the Absolute expressions of the will of the Divine Creator. We call Him God. The Laws and Commandments of the Divine Realm not only express the will of God but are manifestations of the greatest Love and Order that emanates from the Divine Realm of Being [THINK]! Love does not dishonor one's parents, love does not kill, loves does not commit adultery, love does not steal, love does not bear false witness against another, love does not covet the propety or another, etc. Moses got it right; but again he should have since Egypt was the first monotheistic nation and religion known to man. One only has to look at the Egyptian 42 Negative Confessions to understand where Moses gets the Ten Commandments. When humanity takes upon themselves to adhere to and observe such Laws and Commandments then the Order of Heaven and the Harmony that is Heaven exerts it's influence upon this latter realm of Change. In this way the Mind of God is [Logos] is applied by mankind to the realm of matter where humanity finds its home. Then and only then does this passage find its fulfillment:

***Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
(KJV)***

That says it all. From this we can also surmise that the early Christian ideal of the *church* or assembly (*ekklêsia*), the mystical body of Christ, was itself seen by some as a social manifestation of the celestial harmony, whereby all individuals might be unified and uplifted into a greater whole (Clement of Alexander, Exhortation to the Greeks 9, Witt translation, "Plotinus and Posidonius," 201).



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## THE "LOGOS" AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN...THEN HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THE "LOGOS" AND JESUS?

Having surveyed some common ideas regarding the "Logos" during the Hellenistic period, it would be useful to study the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel to see how it relates to this model. It is reproduced below, where the terms "Word" and "world" have been replaced with the Greek originals, "Logos" and "kosmos" respectively:

John 1:1-18 1 In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the kosmos. 10 He was in the kosmos, and the kosmos was made by him, and the kosmos knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (KJV)

It is easy to see how the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel reflects the ideas of the Hellenistic "Logos" teaching, set forth here in its Christian version. The "Logos" is in the archê, the Beginning, Source, or Fount of existence. As the underlying harmonic pattern of creation, all things were made through the "Logos", which contains the principles of Life and Light. The light of the "Logos" shines out, illuminating the darkness of matter, forgetfulness, and our unawakened spiritual nature, yet "the darkness" grasps it not: the darkness cannot understand the Light, nor can it destroy it. But by turning back toward the "Logos" and the world of first principles, humanity discovers what it means to truly live, and is illuminated by the spiritual source of creation.

John the Baptizer is perhaps a member of an Essene community and he bears witness concerning the Light. The kosmos itself is a reflection of the "Logos", which exists here-and-now in the manifest world THROUGH ORDER. This "order" is best understood by the obedience to the will and Commandments and Laws of God; yet, without the power of Mind-the power of Light-the created world is unaware of the higher realities, even though it mirrors them. That explains the message of John the Baptist who came preaching repentance and and turning back toward God and the will of God as found in the Torah-the Laws of God. The "Logos" came unto its own, humanity [the Logos



**resides within each man as we call], but not everyone recognized its nature nor would yield to its will for their lives. Yet those who received the "Logos", "the dayspring from on high," and believed in its divine name, experienced a spiritual regeneration-referred to elsewhere in this gospel as "the birth from above"-and, like the "Logos" itself, became Sons of God. This passage is not saying, I reiterate is not saying, that those who believed in Jesus or the theology created about him later by Rome is "born from above" or "becomes a son of God." Again we must remember to understand this metaphorically and not literally as Rome has tragically not done for thousands of years. As shared above some experiences this awakening to the Spiritual realities that exist among us in this realm of Change better than others; thus the call of repentance to the multitudes to return to obedience of these Laws of God which, when obeyed, yields the fruit of the Logos in this world. Those who had experienced such an awakening to the spiritual realm were the anointed ones calling the masses to turn their hearts unto their fathers of the faith (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; who we have learned were Pharaohs who lived these Laws of God themselves). Understand that if Israel repented and submitted to the rule and reign of God and His principles of Order and Harmony over their lives then the rule and reign and kingship of God would be over their lives and then this world would become the very image of the realm of Being (Heaven would come to earth...As Above...So Beneath). The Kingdom of God would be manifested in our realm of Change and truly the Kingdom of God would be a reality; Heaven would come to Earth (the Realm of Being would overtake the Realm of Change).**

*Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (KJV)*

## THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

**We learned earlier that the "Logos" is part of every person and that to the degree a person surrenders to the rule and reign of the Mind of God in their lives the "Logos" becomes manifested in the life and actions of that person**. Throughout history we find examples of Godly people who stood head and shoulders above their contemporaries. Righteous examples or "avatars" or specially anointed men and women from God can be found in almost every nation of the world if one examines the history of various nations. The Jesus of the New Testament was such an avatar and righteous one of whom I speak. Those who knew him best understood that in him and his life was the purest manifestation of God and His rule that could be found within humanity.

**That being so the we can now properly understand how the "Logos" was made flesh within the lives of these people, and Jesus, as it became incarnate in the universe via the principle of Humanity and was "manifest" among mankind by the degree of their obedience to the Laws of God. This concept must be understood in an allegorical and not a literal manner in order to avoid pagan idolatry. Failure to understand the "Logos" doctrine correctly as shared in this article has rendered billions as idolators and blasphemers in the history of the world in the last two thousand years.**

This word, *manifest*, is usually translated as "dwelt." But the original Greek term is ambiguous and means, literally, "tented" or "tabernacled," referring to the tent in which the tablets of the Mosaic Law were kept.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you again notice the reference to Law in that verse? Is this coincidence or is Law one of the main manifestation of the Divine Mind of the Logos?

The meaning here is that the revelation of the New Law, the "Logos", has now been made manifest among humanity as was the Law of old. The old Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth come through the "Logos", Jesus the Christ, the anointed one who manifested this "new law" by his actions.

## BUT WHEN DID JESUS ACQUIRE THE LOGOS?

According to some early Christians, the human Jesus became the vehicle for the Divine "Logos" only at his baptism by John, signified by the descent of the dove [the doctrine of adoptionism], while developing orthodoxy decided that he had been the incarnation of the "Logos" from the start [pre-existence]. In other words either Jesus received the descending "Logos" because He, the Logos, could tabernacle within such a holy temple and body surrendered to the will of God as Jesus was or either Jesus was born with the Logos fully dwelling within him. Theology will debate this for centuries and the result is that they make Jesus God instead of man anointed by God which allowed the Logos to lead him which is actually the truth; but Rome desiring to pattern Jesus after their pagan gods and godmen will do otherwise and Jesus will become God himself. This was done in 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicea when Jesus was made God! Idolatry has infected almost every believer since!

*John 1:18 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Who is the "Son" in the above verse? Is it Jesus or the "Logos"?

No one has at any time seen the ineffable, High God. I agree with that...for He is the "hidden one"...Atum. But the only-begotten Son seems to have seen Him. Tragically for Christians they interpret this verse as if Jesus is the "Son" in the above verse when in reality it is the "Logos" who is in the bosom of the Father and not Jesus. It is the "Logos" which is part of God Himself which knows and has seen the Father completely since He expresses God to all mankind in the first place. It is the "Logos" as the "Son" of the Father which has revealed to humanity the nature of the transcendent Source, both through consciousness - the Light of Life and through the structure of the universe itself. Understand that the verse says that this "mind of God" in the form of the "Logos" which resides within all humanity manifests God through their Godly actions in which they imitate God or not. Said another way:

- **We either mirror whom God is and what He does through obedience to the Positive Commandments from him or we do not.**
- **We either mirror whom God is not by refraining from breaking the Negative Commandments or we do not.**

We either let the "Logos" shine through us like Jesus or we do not. Some of course do this better than others and Jesus was one who was recognized among his followers as one who portrayed this Divine image through his surrender to the Torah better than most in his day. Jesus and his obedience to the Torah and the will of God in his life as well as his teaching and modeling of such principles among his people revealed to humanity the very nature of this transcendent Source we call God. This revelation is grasped by too few and expressed through one's life by fewer still. There are many such men who line the halls of history who were like Jesus in this manner and history records such great men like Rama, Moses and Yeshua who were manifestations among men of the Divine Logos in human form; again however this is to be understood allegorically and not literally.

## THE LOGOS PERSONIFIED

While the early Christians personified the "Logos" in the figure of Jesus, the Greeks had represented the "Logos" in the figure of Apollo, the god of geometry and music. Take just a minute to notice the "harp" of Apollo; another indication of the intent that Divine Harmony (music/harmony) is to be achieved on earth as it is in Heaven. The relation of the notes of the musical scale to numbers, whereby harmony results from vibrations in equal times, and discord from the reverse, led Pythagoras to apply the word "harmony" to the visible creation, meaning by it the just adaptation of parts to each other. Let us understand again that is this Realm of



Change that must adapt to the Realm of Being (earth to Heaven).

*Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (KJV)*

Another favorite representation was Hermes, who, as the church fathers acknowledge, was actually called "the "Logos" by the Greeks. God in all reality is the true "Logos"; and inasmuch as He is the germ from which all else develops, He is called the seminal Logos (logos spermatikos). This Logos is at the same time a force and a law, an irresistible force which bears along the entire world and all creatures to a common end, an inevitable and holy law from which nothing can withdraw itself, and which every reasonable man should follow willingly (Cleanthus, "Hymn to Zeus" in "Fr. Stoic." I, 527-cf. 537). Conformably to their exegetical habits, the Stoics made of the different gods personifications of the Logos, e. g. of Zeus and above all of Hermes.

At Alexandria, Egypt, Hermes was identified with Thoth, the god of Hermopolis, known later as the great Hermes, "Hermes Trismegistus", and represented as the revealer of all letters and all religion.

As above, so below. This saying, attributed to Thoth as being the most fundamental truth of our conscious minds, is the basis of the outer Hermetic teaching. The idea is that the world is a mirror of heaven – a reflection. The divine patterns found here are a reflection of those in the worlds above. Everything that is understandable here has meaning because it's pattern is represented in the divine. Thoth was the 'god of the equilibrium' (harmony like Apollo) and considered depictions of him as the 'Master of the Balance' to indicate that he was associated with the equinoxes - the time when the day and the night were balanced. Such balance is best understood as well as this "harmony" that was to exist on earth as it did in Heaven and this comes through the indwelling "Logos" or the "mind of God" within each man as he is called by it to surrender to the will of God and His Laws on this earth. As stated above Thoth was later identified with the Greek god Hermes in the form of Hermes Trismegistos ("Hermes the thrice great"), in which form he remained popular in medieval magic and alchemy. Thoth was also a god of the underworld, where he served as a clerk who recorded the judgments on the souls of the dead (for the failure to live by the Laws of God). Alternatively, it was Thoth himself who weighed the hearts of the dead against the feather of Truth in the Hall of the Two Truths. Thoth was the god of writing and knowledge.

Now back to our main point concerning the Logos. Many great men were known to have brought Divine wisdom and knowledge from God (Thoth/Hermes) to bear upon this world and were considered as representations of the Logos among mankind. Jesus was not the first; nor the last. Thus Justin Martyr writes:

*"When we say, as before, that he [Jesus] was begotten by God as the Word of God in a unique manner beyond the ordinary birth, this should be no strange thing for you who speak of Hermes as the announcing word [Logos] from God" (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 22; in Richardson, Early Christian Fathers, 256).*

For example, according to the gnostic sect of the Nassenes, "Hermes is the Word who has expressed and fashioned the things that have been, that are and that will be" (Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies 5.2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 50); translation by Doresse, Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics, 84).

In ancient Egypt, where the "Logos" theology appears at an early date, the Greek god Hermes was later identified with the Egyptian divinity Thoth. Thoth was the personification of the universal order, the "heart and tongue" of the sun god Ra who "spoke the words" which resulted in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you beginning to see the connection between "tongue of Ra" and "spoken words" and this "logos" long before the concepts of the New Testament borrowed such words?

According to Iamblichus, Thoth was the author of 36,525 books (equal to the number of days in one hundred solar years). He was represented as the "scribe of the gods," the revealer of mathematics, geometry, and priestly knowledge. As E. A. Wallis Budge points out:

*His knowledge and powers of calculation measured out the heavens, and planned the earth, and everything which is in them; his will and power kept the forces in heaven and earth in equilibrium; it was his great skill in celestial mathematics which made proper use of the laws (maât) upon which the foundation and maintenance of the universe rested; it was he who directed the motions of the heavenly bodies and their times and seasons; and without his words the gods, whose existence depended on them, could not have kept their place among the followers of Ra (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians I, 407-408).*

As "the reason and mental powers" of the sun god Ra, Thoth was "also the means by which the will of Ra, "God," translated into speech" (Budge, Gods of the Egyptians I, 407). As the revealer of celestial knowledge, the attributes of Thoth are later reflected in the figure Hermes Trismegistos (Thrice-Great Hermes), the reputed author of the Egyptian Hermetic writings. While the actual authors of these important works are unknown, like the unknown authors of the Christian gospels, Iamblichus repeats the tradition that "Hermes, the god who presides over language, was formerly very properly considered as common to all priests; and the power who presides over the true science concerning the gods is one and the same in the whole of things. Hence our ancestors dedicated the inventions of their wisdom to this deity, inscribing all their own writings with the name of Hermes" [Iamblichus, On The Mysteries 1.1 (Taylor translation, 17-18)].

## THE LOGOS AND THE HERMETIC WRITINGS

The Greek Hermetic tractates were written and used in Egypt during a period stretching from perhaps 100 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. by members of Hermetic spiritual communities which were active in synthesizing native Egyptian teachings with the expressions of Greek philosophy. The ideas of this "pagan gnosticism" were certainly "in the air" during the formative days of early Christianity, and while "no direct literary relationship can be traced. . . it seems clear that [the person who wrote the Gospel of] John was working with similar presuppositions and along similar lines to those of the Hermetic authors" (C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John, 31).

The Hermetic writings are cast as revelation discourses between Hermes Trismegistos, the spiritual "father," and Tat, his "son," the aspiring initiate. In an esoteric sense, "Hermes" and "Tat" may represent two aspects of an individual's soul, the higher and lower natures respectively. Through "his" writings and discourse with his disciples, Hermes Trismegistos reveals teachings of a spiritual and cosmological nature, concerning the nature of God, the soul, the origin and structure of the cosmos, and the path through which the soul may experience its divinizing rebirth in the divine principle of Mind or *Nous*. Common to all of these writings are parallels to the Hellenistic "Logos" doctrine as it has been summarized in this as well as prior articles on the



## "Logos."

According to the underlying myth of Gnosis, humanity is asleep, forgetful of its celestial origin and true nature. It is the task of the "Gnostic Revealer" [as the manifestation of the Logos] to descend through the heavenly spheres and fan the slumbering sparks of spiritual knowledge which lie dormant within the soul, leading to the recognition of one's authentic nature and spiritual destiny. In Christianity, Jesus is personified as the Gnostic Revealer, the teacher of saving knowledge, especially in such works as the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas. But understand history records many of these Gnostic Revelers of God which expressed among mankind the Logos better than their peers and Jesus is not the only one nor the last of them. In the Hermetic writings, Hermes Trismegistos represents another Hellenistic manifestation of the "Logos", also personified as the Gnostic Revealer. Understand what personification means: a picture of the real but not the actual "real." While one may have many teachers in life, Clement of Alexandria states that the ultimate spiritual teacher is the "Logos" itself, "the Teacher from whom all instruction comes" [Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks II (Anti-Nicene Fathers, II, 203)]. According to the ancients, the "Logos" exists without, yet also within. We can never be separated from the harmony of the universe because we are its living reflection, even if in our slumber, this recognition has been temporarily obscured.



Like the teachings of the early Christians, the Hermetic writings focus upon the mystery of the soul's "rebirth" and transfiguration, the discovery of "the inner man," which results in a divinization of the personality. Through this existential realization, the gnostic-the true initiate-discovers who he is, where he has been, and where he is going. The gnostic realization is that awakened, transfigured humanity is a manifestation of Nous, the Divine Intellect, the first emanation of the unknowable Source. Simply said we become "sons of God." In one of the Hermetic writings, The Cup or the Monad, the story is told of how the world creator, while giving each person a share of reason (logos), did not bestow on every soul an equal portion of Mind. Rather, Mind was "set up in the midst of souls, just as it were a prize" [Corpus Hermeticum 4 (The Cup of Monad), 3 (Mead translation, Thrice-Greatest Hermes, II, 56)]. In language which strongly parallels that of early Christianity, Hermes explains the liberating baptism in the Cup of Mind. The world creator, he says

*filled a mighty cup with it, and sent it down, joining a Herald to it, to whom He gave command to make this proclamation to the hearts of men: Baptize thyself with this Cup's baptism, what heart can do so; you who have faith can ascend to Him who sent down the cup, you who know why you have come into being! As many then as understood the Herald's tidings and doused themselves in Mind, became partakers in the Gnosis; and when they had "received the Mind" they were made "perfect men." But they who do not understand the tidings, these, since they possess the aid of Reason ("Logos") only and not Mind (Nous), are ignorant of why and how they have come into being [Corpus Hermeticum 13 (Mead translation, Thrice-Greatest Hermes, II, 57)].*

Elsewhere, in another work, The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth, Hermes explains the process through which this divinization is experienced. Recalling the passage in the Fourth Gospel where Nicodemus asks, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*, Tat proclaims *"I know not, thrice-greatest one, from what womb a man can be born again, nor from what seed"* [Corpus Hermeticum 13 (The Secret Discourse Concerning Rebirth), 1 (Scott translation, Hermetica, I, 239)].

**Answer for yourself:** Do you see this similarity between the Gospel of John and the Hermetic writings?

**Hermes explains that the womb of rebirth is Wisdom** and that the Will of God is the begetter. The mystery of rebirth produces the race of the Divine Sonship; this cannot be taught, but, when the time is right, God recalls the knowledge of the spiritual realities to one's awareness, the knowledge the soul possessed before being born into a body. As Walter Scott summarizes the teaching of this tractate:

*The man whom the Rebirth brings into being is a son of God; he belongs to the world of Mind; he is composed of divine Powers. He who has been born again has become an incorporeal being; he is no longer a thing visible to bodily eyes.... He sees things no longer by bodily sense; he sees with the eye of Mind. And thus seeing, he finds himself to be one with all that exists; he feels himself to be omnipresent and eternal. The new self which has thus come into being is imperishable. He who has once become a god, and son of God, can never cease to be that which he has become (Scott, *Hermetica*, II, 372).*

In this ecstatic, transcendent state, both Christian and Hermetic mystics entered into **divine union with the "Logos", the Divine Intellect**, the source of Life and Light. **Contrary to what you have been taught the key Pauline phrase "in Christ" does not mean in union with a man (Jesus) but union with the Divine Intellect.** This union does not come, as the Pagans or Rome would later teach through the eating of the God in the form of wafers or drinking the blood of God which we find in communion in our churches today. Hopefully you see the difference that **this union with the Divine intellect comes through knowledge of the Divine, His Word, and your surrender to it in your life and your actions.**

*Therefore we must study to learn of these things because Western Christianity refused them centuries ago and made significant efforts to prevent you from ever learning of these principles*

**Instructed by the "Logos" itself, then we become its mouthpiece. Doing so then we understand that the ancients who understood these principles could thus honestly proclaim that the realizations they experienced were the direct teachings of Christ or Hermes. It is no doubt from such ecstatic, heightened states of consciousness that many of the inspired *logia* or "sayings of the Lord" originated that later found their way into the early Christian literature.** That is why Jesus - the "Logos" personified as the "Gnostic Revealer" - can accurately say in the Gospel of Thomas,

*"He who will drink from My [the Logos speaking of Himself] mouth will become like Me. I [the Logos] myself shall become he [one man in purpose and will], and the things that are hidden [in the Spirit realm] will be revealed to him [mankind]." [Gospel of Thomas 108 (in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 137)].*

**Generally speaking, the ancient gnostics primarily viewed Christ as an eternal, celestial power, the "Logos", with which it is possible to have an intimate, personal relation, since our higher consciousness is made in its image.** For this reason, gnostics stressed the experiential union with the divine, and showed little interest in the historical Jesus, whom it has always been impossible to know in a concrete sense, or even accurately in a historical sense. Because of this, gnostic speculation has always possessed a very strong ahistorical, cosmological tendency and dimension, preferring to concentrate on the liberating realization of Christ within.

This realization, of which the mystics speak, is the secret of initiation, and was referred to by the early Christians in a number of ways. **The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel makes it clear that those who "received" the "Logos" experienced a divinizing energy, thus "becoming Sons of God," a transformation also referred to in the Hermetic writings. Elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, this is**



referred to in Greek as "the birth from above" (John. 3:3).

*John 3:3 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

Origen, in his work Against Celsus, states that those who follow the example of "the Sun of Righteousness," who sent forth His rays from Judaea, become not only followers of Christ, but Christs in their own right. An even more appealing analogy is offered by Clement, who writes that not even the sun can show us the true God. That is because:

*The healthful Word or Reason, who is the Sun of the soul, alone can do that; through Him alone, when He has risen within in the depth of the mind, the soul's eye is illuminated (Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 6 (Loeb Classical Library translation, 155).*

## THE LOGOS AS MEDIATOR

We mentioned earlier that the "Logos" is called the "mediator." One of the primary roles of the "Logos" in Greek thought is its function as celestial mediator, the "geometric mean" between extremes. That is why Jesus proclaims, in the Gospel of John when speaking of the Logos; *"I am the Way" and "I am the Door."*

Jesus never meant to say as the Catholic Church would later fashion that only though accepted orthodox beliefs and religious doctrines ABOUT himself (Jesus), which were to be created later by Rome concerning him, was one to be "saved." As the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel states, *"No one has at any time seen God."* However, *"The only-begotten Son (the Logos), who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him."* Jesus in his actions and words modeled the thoughts of God and applied them to his life as few did in his day. Jesus revealed the "Logos" through his surrendered life. Simply said Jesus imitated the God he knew as expressed to him through the Logos that dwelled within him. This did not make Jesus the same as God or God in the flesh in a literal sense but only in an allegorical or metaphorical sense as he lived "Godly" among his people.

*We need do the same by observing the same Laws and Commandments as Jesus did (the Laws of Noah for the Gentile and the Laws of Moses for the Jewish people)*

We need let the logos be expressed in our lives by surrendering to the will of God in our lives. Not only is the "Logos" the image and manifestation of the otherwise transcendent Source, but it is the connecting principle through which we are joined back to the One, and that is why Jesus is represented as the mediator between heaven and earth in Christian symbolism. Again not literally as we have come to believe in error, but as the expression of the Divine Logos among men as the ultimate example of a Godly life. To the degree we live and surrender to the will of God we like Jesus let the Logos, the manifestation of this transcendent Source, life in and through us. The Kingdom of God goes then where we go.

As Christianity evolved into a collective belief system, it developed a political structure and creeds, teaching that Jesus came and left at a particular point in time, and that it was only possible to achieve salvation by joining the ranks of the organized church. The Catholic Church taught that there was no salvation outside of the Bishop! At the same, it outlawed other forms of religious expression, and confiscated the property of prominent individuals who resisted conversion to the new faith. This of course guaranteed the success of Christianity.

**The church thereby proclaimed itself the official mediator between man and God, instead of the "Logos," thus usurping the original function of the indwelling Christ/ the "Logos". The Catholic Church now took the role of the Logos which God put in every man!** However, according to the gnostic approach, the "Logos" is an ever-present celestial power, not limited by time, space, or political boundaries; nor to a single appearance only in one man as Christianity teaches concerning Jesus. It underlies the structure of the universe and consciousness, and, for those attuned to its nature, the "Logos" illuminates the inner recesses of the heart with eternal, spiritual knowledge. That is why Jesus, in the ancient Gospel of Thomas, can accurately say as speaking of the Logos: *"It is I [the Logos] who am the light which is above them all. It is I [the Logos] who am the All. From Me [the Logos] did the All come forth, and unto Me [the Logos] did the All extend. Split a piece of wood and I am there."*

*Now you know the truth about the Logos.....which is only to be understood as allegory of the Divine Intelligence of the Creator that inhabits every man [Gospel of Thomas 77 (in Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library, 135)]*

**Answer for yourself:** Now; is Jesus to be understood as the literal Logos and equal with God or even God himself the way Christianity has taught it and the way you have been taught to read the Gospel of John concerning Jesus and the "Logos?" No way!





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# THE ANCIENT MEANING OF THE "LOGOS" WHICH IS LOST TO ALMOST ALL MANKIND TODAY

Let us do a little refreshing of prior concepts before we get to an in-depth study of the Logos which finds its origin in Egypt long before Gentile Christianity redefines the term.

The cosmological ideas of ancient Egypt were expressed by myth and symbolism, which are a superior means for expressing metaphysical concepts. Philosophy, mathematics and science are dry subjects with many abstracts. Mythology incorporates philosophical and scientific ideas into a story form, like a sacred drama or mystery play, which can be easily digested. Pure philosophical and scientific abstracts and terms do not guarantee understanding. Information alone is useless, unless it is transformed into understanding. Well-crafted mythology can achieve that understanding.

The Egyptian creation myths, regarding the universe, are similar to the account provided in the opening chapter of Genesis: God creates heaven and earth, divides the waters, creates the light, and gives life to animals and man. Once you see how the Jewish people find their origin within Egypt then you will understand why Genesis is a mirror image of what the Egyptians taught about the creation!

The origin of the world and the nature of the neteru [not gods remember?; but energies and forces or we can call them Spirit/God] who took part in its creation were subjects of constant interest to the Egyptians. Now what I will say next is very important so pay close attention to these 4 centers of Theological Diversity for they will be of major importance as we later see their role in shaping the events that produced the Exodus. The Egyptian cosmology was divided into four separate but complementary teachings, each with its center of interest. The four Egyptian separate teachings at the four centers were sponsored by four different neteru:

- The main neteru of creation are Ra of Onnu (Heliopolis),
- Ptah of Men-Nefer (Memphis),
- Amen of Ta-Apet (Thebes).
- The fourth, namely Tehuti (Thoth) of Khmunu (Hermopolis), provided an account of creation as a result of the word-analogous to the opening of the Gospel according to St. John.

*Notice if you would that one of the "creative forces" that finds itself within God is "the Word;" better known later by the Greek term "Logos."*

I want to draw your attention to the fact that the Egyptians understood creation to be act of various forces and powers: Ra, Ptah, Amen, and Thoth. Each of these energies and powers and forces were personified as Ra, Ptah, Amen, and Thoth. These together made up God. Each of these powers, energies, and forces had its own major city which taught of their own role and ascribed to each its own theology. The city of Heliopolis was concerned with Ra and his manifestations in the Universe, the city of

Memphis was concerned with Ptah and his role in the Universe, the city of Thebes with Amen and likewise Hermopolis with Thoth (the Word). The Divine Revelation possessed by Egypt was expressed through their writings concerning these various aspects of God and His role in the Cosmos through these energies and forces which not only began creation but sustained it daily.

## THE ANCIENT MEANING OF LOGOS

*"When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it." [Prologue to the Gospel of John: 1-5]*

If you are a Christian you are most familiar with the above passage but I assure you that you don't as of yet understand the concept correctly because Gentile Christianity has changed and altered the meaning of the concept almost beyond recognition and no longer understands the term "Logos" as nothing more than a personification of a force or power that finds itself with God. If you are like most Christians you have been told that Jesus is the Logos is a literal way and attached to this is the idea of incarnation. You will find upon examination of the term in the language and culture in which it originates it NEVER was to be understood in a "LITERAL" way as has been done and taught by Gentile Christianity. Let us investigate this term thoroughly to find the truth about the "Logos" which is lost to almost all mankind today; that is unless they study hard to find it.

## RECOVERING TRUTH LONG OVERLOOKED

It is the "Word" that we most often hear in terms of describing the Logos. But there is much more.

Referring to the Logos merely in terms of the concept of "Word" is considered inadequate by serious scholars. The best way to get a grip on the Logos is by exploring how it was used in Egyptian religion, in Greek philosophy, in the Old Testament (where it is the Sophia), and in Early Christianity and compare the meanings for consistency and deviation of the original meaning of the term.

Taking account the Egyptian hermetic writings, "probably the earliest antecedent to the idea of the Logos came from...Heraclitus." His conceptual universe was one that constantly changed, a universe in constant motion propelled by all-pervading Reason, which Heraclitus likened to divine fire or energy.

Following Heraclitus, the philosopher Anaxagoras considered a "Divine Mind", which was immanent in the created order... [John A. Sanford, Mystical Christianity: A Psychological Commentary On The Gospel of John, Crossroad, 1995, p. 19]

Sanford mentions Plato's idea of a "spiritual reality that gave to the created world its form and being." This was the imaginal realm of Platonic Forms, an archetypal realm of changeless and universal patterns of which "the material world is but an imperfect representation." For Sanford, the Logos "partakes of the of the nature of this archetypal reality." [Ibid, p. 19]

Aristotle believed that matter and form always existed together. Hence, for him, human beings had not only a material body, but also a soul in which there dwells a divine spark that the soul shares with God. "This spark of divinity in human nature is an element of the divine Logos--the shaping spiritual power and essence of God--is eternal and impersonal." [Ibid, p. 20].

*I hope you noticed that the "Logos" is to be found in ALL mankind and not just one person.*



Sanford stresses that the concept of the Logos was most fully expressed by the Stoic philosophers. Stoicism believed the Universe to consist of two kinds of matter: a gross or coarse matter; and an extremely fine matter, which is virtually indistinguishable from the idea of spirit. The material, created order is thus pervaded with the spiritual substance, but it is also pervaded with a vital element--like the energetic fire of Heraclitus--that shaped, harmonized, and interpenetrated all things. For the Stoics, this was nothing less than an intelligent, self-conscious world-soul, an indwelling Logos within mankind.

Considering the Logos as God, and as the source of all life and all wisdom--then our 'human reason partakes of its nature, because this Logos dwells within us. For this reason we can follow the God within and refer to ourselves as the offspring of God.' [Ibid, p.20]

Fideler packages these ancient concepts of the Logos as follows: "Logos designates the power of 'reason;' the pattern or order of things; the principle of relationship; and an articulation of something."

In general, the Logos has the following meanings:

- Order or pattern.
- Ratio or proportion.
- A discourse, articulation or account, even a 'sermon.'
- Reason, both in the sense of rationality and in the sense of an articulation of the cause of something.
- Principle or cause (logoi=principles, ratios, reasons).
- A principle of mediation and harmony between extremes

[David Fideler, Jesus Christ...Sun of God:Ancient Cosmology And Early Christian Symbolism, Quest Books, 1993, p. 38]

Further discussing the meaning of the Logos, Sanford also stresses the "equally important influence of the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we find an idea of God's creative spirit immanent within the creation and residing even in the human soul that is as old--or perhaps older--as that of the Greeks." [Mystical Christianity, p. 21]. My studies reveal that last statement to be true; the "Logos" teaching predated Greece and even the Jews as it can be found as far back as the earliest recorded literature among mankind in Egypt.

In parts of the Old Testament it is the \*Sophia\* that embodies and symbolizes the feminine aspect of God. The Sophia shared in the generative power which created the world. The Sophia "dwelt immanent within the world, and which also dwelt within the human heart..." The Sophia was considered the fount of all human knowledge, whether physical, psychological or spiritual--"knowledge, which she can likewise impart because she is mistress of the soul." [Ibid, p. 22]

The philosophers of the early Church saw Christ as the embodiment of the Sophia as well as the Incarnation of the Logos. Now we get to the very crux of this problem that confronts Christianity today. The term "Christ" means "anointing" and is not a person's name; it is better understood as a part of God within every man and is displayed by some better than others due to their obedience to the Laws and Reason of the Universe. This term and concept was applied to Jesus/Yeshua by his followers in a symbolic way because Yeshua lived before them the "Divine" life better than any and lived the Laws of God in such a way that he reflected best the Divine that is within each man. Jesus was by his followers NEVER thought to be the LITERAL "Logos" in a body form until much later under Gentile influences. You might say that Jesus/Yeshua exhibited in his life and teachings the Divine Harmony of Heaven on earth through his obedience to the Laws of his Father God (the First Cause). Order, another definition of the "Logos," was manifested best in Yeshua's life as he exhibited Heaven on Earth through his actions and message and even taught his followers to imitate him in this way by yielding to the Divine Reason within them and through obedience to the

**Commandments of God which bring order to this world whereby they could manifest Heaven on earth:**

***Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (KJV)***

For these early Christian thinkers...it was clear that to say "Christ was the Word" was to assign to Christ a profoundly mystical and far-reaching reality. It meant that the utterly transcendent God...created the world through that self-expression termed the Logos, and that this Logos, or Creative Word of God, is immanent within all of the creation." [Ibid, p. 23]

These early Christian philosophers also believed in Christ's pre-existence [notice again we are not speaking of the human Jesus]. Christ as the Logos or Wisdom of God had to exist from the beginning before incarnation, in a symbolic sense, could take place.

Sanford sums it up beautifully: "The world-creating Logos [order] could be seen in the movements of the heavenly bodies, in the majesty of the skies, in the great ocean with its abundance of life, but also could be seen in the tiniest unit of life...But the most important place where the Word of God was to be found for the early Christians was within the soul herself, where it lived as an "imago dei," like a spring of water from which flowed the knowledge of God." [Ibid, p. 23]. The term "imago dei" means the imitation of the God of the Universe. This order expressed by these Divine forces and powers was communicated by the "Logos" to mankind thought Physical and Spiritual Laws. Our interest is upon the Spiritual Laws best understood as the Law or the Torah. Properly understood the Laws of God in the Torah are the highest expressions of "order" and "reason" that mankind can know. They are the highest expressions of true love in the Universe. They consist of 365 Commandments of which 248 are "positive" and 365 are "negative." When one comes to understand and conducts his life according to these Laws and understands them as Divine Revelation of Whom this God "is and does..the positive Commandments" and Whom this God "is not and does not-the negative Commandments" and then patterns his life after them then he exhibits the "Logos" to the fullest degree as did Yeshua/Jesus. Thus Jesus, living before others these Laws to their fullest, was seen and understood to be the fullest representation of the Divine in human form; therefore others believed him to be the "Christ" or "Logos" in human flesh. History records for us many "Christs" but among Israel few if any had yielded so perfectly to the Will of God as had Yeshua.

***I Jn 2:27 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (KJV)***

As you can see mankind is the repository of this "Logos" and it is up to each of us to yield to this order of Heaven in our lives and some do it better than others and history records such great men or "avatars." Therefore Yeshua/Jesus became a vessel of honor whereby the fullness of the Godhead (neteru) could tabernacle within him to a greater degree than it had in others that came before him.

We now come to another problem brought into being by the failure of the Gentiles to understand properly the concepts enumerated above. The "Christ" that indwell every man and the "anointing" that dwell within every man as the "Logos" was "without measure in Yeshua as taught by the writer of the Gospel of John.

***John 3:34 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. (KJV)***

The question arises as to "when" Yeshua received this "Logos" or "anointing." Historically the Jews who knew Yeshua record for us that the "anointing" manifested itself at one' baptism. That might sound simple until you understand "baptism" from a Jewish perspective for it is not unusual for a Jewish male to be baptized or "mikvehed" before each Festival, meeting in the Temple for the Sabbath, after repentance, etc., and even more for a women following her menses. It is in this sense that one is "**born from above**" over and over and the recorded instance for us in the Gospels records Yeshua being anointed at this particular mikveh before Yom Kippur. **No Jewish male could be in right standing with God and participate in one of the Seven**



**Festivals of YHWH unless "born again" or "mikvehed" before observance of the Festival. In the traditional sense Yeshua received the "anointing without measure" at this instance in his life. Contrary views later surfaced by the Gentile Church where older pagan myths of sun worshiping nations were removed from their "allegorical" meanings and applied LITERALLY to Jesus and the incarnation of the "Logos/anointing" was now taught as if existing before the beginning of time. We have seen however in the earlier article and articles that this incarnation was always to be understood in a metaphorical and allegorical sense and NEVER in a LITERAL sense as applied by the Gentile Church as the myths of pagan sun gods and sun godmen was LITERALLY applied to Jesus as if he were one and the same. He was not.**



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# THE WISDOM BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The wisdom books of the Old Testament concern the topic of Wisdom (Hebrew: **Chokmah**; Greek: **Sophia**), which is personified in many of the books as a female figure.

Most commentators include five books in this group:

Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes (also called Kohelet), Ecclesiasticus (also called the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach) and the Wisdom of Solomon (the Book of Wisdom).

## THE CHANGING VIEWS OF WISDOM

What becomes apparent when reading the different books listed above is that perspectives about Wisdom gradually changed over time and were these perspectives were affected by the historical circumstances present when the individual books were composed.

The *Book of Job* asks why unhappiness exists if humanity is meant to be happy, for in spite of his piety Job's life has become miserable. He implores God to help him understand the meaning of unhappiness and whether the expectation of reward is justified. What he comes to realize is that happiness and recompense for piety are bound up with mysteries which cannot be understood by reason alone. It is only when this is accepted that the Lord who transcends everything can ultimately bring about happiness and well being.

Eventually things do turn out better for Job. The wise attitude that Job expresses at the beginning of his trials: *"The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord"* (Job 1,21) helps him to persevere through much pain and suffering. Trusting surrender, faith, and constancy in trial leads him to happiness.

The *Book of Ecclesiastes* (Greek: *Ecclesiastes*; Hebrew: *Kohelet*) also talks about surrender; yet not surrender born of piety and courage but of disappointment and resignation:

*I considered my handiwork, all my labor and toil: it was futility, all of it, and a chasing of the wind...*

*So I thought, "I too shall suffer the fate of the fool. To what purpose have I been wise? Where is the profit? Even this," I said to myself, "is futile" (Eccies. 2,11,15).*

*For everything its season, and for every activity under the heavens its time: A time to be born and a time to die. . . a time to weep and a time to laugh.. . a time for war and a time for peace (Eccies. 3,1-8).*

*To eat and drink and experience pleasure in return for his labors, this does not come from any good in a person: it comes from God (Eccies. 2,24).*



Such resigned surrender can lead to an attitude which is accepting of life, taking life as it comes and making the best of it, satisfied with the modest happiness of daily life.

Yet because Ecclesiastes has a tendency toward resignation and even pessimism, the question has been raised as to why it was taken into the Canon of Holy Scripture? It can be answered that the point of view that it expresses does belong to a universal kind of wisdom that mediates the tensions between hope and despair, ideal and reality, happiness and unhappiness, and success and failure that life brings. Both Ecclesiastes and Job pose questions about the meaning of happiness in a radical way and try to offer solutions that validate existence.

The *Book of Proverbs* contains a summary of the proverbial treasures of the Jewish people and their neighbors gathered over a period of hundreds of years **(the Wisdom teachings of the Egyptians and Babylonians in particular were integrated into Judaism)**. Parts of it are older than Job and Ecclesiastes.

The oldest portion of Proverbs talks about various paths to happiness, and in the portion composed later these paths merge into the way pointed out by Wisdom who appears as a person.

Happiness is initially depicted in worldly terms (riches, honor and personal welfare) but ultimately comes to signify the development of qualities like integrity, fear of the Lord, righteousness, good conduct and willingness to learn. Wisdom is life, but it gradually becomes clear that life signifies more than material riches; it is virtue itself:

*She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and those who hold fast to her are safe (Prov. 3,18).*

*In my hands are riches and honour, boundless wealth and prosperity. . . . I endow with riches those who love me; I shall fill their treasuries (Prov. 8,18,21).*

*Happy the one who listens to me, watching daily at my threshold. . . . For whoever finds me finds life. . . but whoever fails to find me deprives himself (Prov. 8,34-36).*

*Wisdom has built her house. . . . Now, having slaughtered a beast, spiced her wine, and spread her table. . . she says*

*"Come, eat the food I have prepared and taste the wine I have spiced" (Prov. 9,1-5).*

*Idle hands make for penury; diligent hands make for riches (Prov. 10,4).*

*The fruit of humility is fear of God with riches and honor and life (Prov. 22,4).*

The *Book of Ecclesiasticus* presupposes "fear of the Lord"-great reverence for God and His Law-as the necessary precondition for happiness:

*The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord. . . . Wisdom's garland is fear of the Lord (Eccius. 1,14,18).*

In common with Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus also enumerates many gifts of Wisdom-honor, pride, cheerfulness, joy and long life (Ecclus. 1,11-12,17-18). In ensuing chapters, however, Ecclesiasticus is clearer about a personal view of Wisdom which sees Her as Mistress and Teacher:

*Wisdom raises her sons to greatness. . . . He who holds fast to her will gain honor; the Lord's blessing rests on the house she enters. . . . the Lord loves those who love her (Eccius. 4,11,13,14).*

It is befitting that the wise person serve Wisdom, for in serving Wisdom one serves the Holy One (Eccius. 4,14)

and one's efforts bear fruit: *"If you cultivate her. . . soon you will be enjoying the harvest"* (Eccius. 6,19). The author goes so far as to recommend:

*Put your feet in Wisdom's fetters and your neck into her collar. . . . Do not let her go. . . . she will transform herself for you into joy.. . . You will put her on like a splendid robe and wear her like a garland of joy* (Eccius. 6,24,27-28,31).

She will be to him *"like a mother and young bride"* and crown him *"with joy and exultation"* (Eccius. 15,2,6). She is *"the mother of honourable love"* (Eccius. 24,18).

In Ecclesiasticus one finds Wisdom and happiness by fulfilling the Law. *Wisdom is "the law laid on us by Moses"* (Ecclus. 24,23). The life-giving strength of this Law is compared with the rivers of Paradise and with the most beautiful trees and scented bushes (24,13-15,25). Wisdom's happiness in Ecclesiasticus consists of paradisaical abundance and splendor.

The *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon* is the most recent of the Wisdom Books to appear, and it resolves the enigma of life in an essentially new way. It leaves behind an earthly pursuit of happiness and opens the door to a vision of the eternal life which the soul reaps as its reward: *"to keep her laws is a warrant of immortality; and immortality brings a person nearer to God"* (Wisd. 6,18-19). Wisdom leads the way to eternity and the transcendent order, and this fundamentally new perspective questions previously held values and points to the resolution of hitherto unresolved problems.

References to life after death in the Book of Wisdom (and in Proverbs also) evinces an Egyptian influence. Descriptions of Wisdom's cosmological dimension (*"She is more beautiful than the sun, and surpasses every constellation. . . . She spans the world in power from end to end, and gently orders all things"*) - 7,29; 8,1) also *recalls the Egyptian goddess Isis*, though in a more Hellenistic form.





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## THE PERSONAL CONCEPTION OF WISDOM...PERSONIFIED

Holy Wisdom (*Chokmah* or *Sophia*) was generally understood as the key to happiness and soon came to be viewed as a virtue and capacity given by God for recognizing what leads to happiness and achieving it. Over time Wisdom gradually began to be understood as a mysterious being in God, created before all time, who works together in the creation and counsels God, sharing the throne as God's Beloved (Prov. 8,22-31; Wisd. 8,3-4; 9,4).

### Prov 8:22-31

*22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. (KJV)*

### Wisdom of Solomon

*3: In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility: yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her. 4: For she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of his works.*

Now what I say is very important for theological reasons. Because of Sophia's in creation She mediates between God and the world, coming from God and leading back to God.

We saw in prior articles that the names Sophia and Christ were interchangeable: "Sophia" being the feminine aspect of God's mediation with the physical realm and "the Christ" being the masculine aspect of God's mediation with His physical creation.

Understand that Sophia and "the Christ" are mediators between God and mankind! A dawning sense of Wisdom's independent nature had appeared in the Book of Job; but She is clearly recognized for the first time in Proverbs, where She is poetically proclaimed as the Teacher and Guide to happiness who hosts the banquet of understanding and life (Prov. 8,32-36; 9,1-6).

*Prov 8:32-36 32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my*

*ways. 33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. 34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (KJV)*

*Prov 9:1-6 1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: 2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. 3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, 4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, 5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. 6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. (KJV)*

Ecclesiastes does not take up Wisdom's personal aspect, which perhaps would not have interested its unspeculative author whose concerns are more practical. Ecclesiasticus does present Her in personal terms, depicting Her proceeding from the mouth of God, Her rulership over the world and its nations, and Her particular relationship to the people of Israel. What is especially emphasized is Wisdom's function as the universal Law (Torah) of God and the world which orders and directs all things. Following the Law becomes the path to happiness, though this happiness is still defined in worldly terms (Ecclus 24,1-12; 23-26).

*24:1. Wisdom shall praise her own self, and shall be honoured in God, and shall glory in the midst of her people, 24:2. And shall open her mouth in the churches of the most High, and shall glorify herself in the sight of his power, 24:3. And in the midst of her own people she shall be exalted, and shall be admired in the holy assembly. 24:4. And in the multitude of the elect she shall have praise, and among the blessed she shall be blessed, saying: 24:5. I came out of the mouth of the most High, the firstborn before all creatures: 24:6. I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth, and as a cloud I covered all the earth: 24:7. I dwelt in the highest places, and my throne is in a pillar of a cloud. 24:8. I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven, and have penetrated into the bottom of the deep, and have walked in the waves of the sea, 24:9. And have stood in all the earth: and in every people, 24:10. And in every nation I have had the chief rule: 24:11. And by my power I have trodden under my feet the hearts of all the high and low: and in all these I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. 24:12. Then the creator of all things commanded, and said to me: and he that made me, rested in my tabernacle,*

*24:23. As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour: and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches. 24:24. I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. 24:25. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue. 24:26. Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits.*

The Book of Wisdom takes a further step toward unveiling the mystery of Holy Wisdom. What was tentatively perceived in the previous Wisdom Books is glimpsed more fully:

that She proceeds from God, and Her divine dignity and life at God's side, assisting and counseling God. All of this is depicted in a clear language which would seem to go beyond a poetic personification (Wisd. 7,25-28; 8,3-4; 9,4).

*25: For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. 26: For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness. 27: And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new: and in all ages*



*entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. 28: For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.*

*3: In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility: yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her. 4: For she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of his works.*

*4: Give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne; and reject me not from among thy children:*

She is presented in Her relationship to creation and the cosmos also, as the spiritual power which creates, permeates, enlivens, and renews all things (Wisd. 7,22-24).

*22: For wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me: for in her is an understanding spirit holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, 23: Kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtil, spirits. 24: For wisdom is more moving than any motion: she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness.*

She cares for humanity by always and everywhere providing friends and prophets of God (Wisd. 7,27).

*27: And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets.*

What a description that we just read. The Sophia (Wisdom of God) enters into our very souls and makes us friends of God and anoints us as prophets. The Sophia is called the Holy Spirit. She is all powerful. She is the breath and power of God. She is the creator and the first born of all creatures. She comes from the mouth and breath of God.

**Answer for yourself:** Does any of this sound familiar? It should as these very concepts are taught by Paul concerning "the Christ". Again we only have here the same manifestations and works of God; one in the feminine and one in the masculine! They are both mediators to bridge the gap for mankind's ascent to God.

It is a grandiose picture of Wisdom that emerges from everything that is said about Her in the Wisdom Books. Some Church Fathers understood Her as the Logos and some as the Holy Spirit (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianz, and Augustine understood Wisdom as the Logos. Irenaeus and Tehophilus of Antioch understood Wisdom as the Holy Spirit). Others have called Her the Mother of Creation and the Soul of the World and have identified Her as Mary, the Mother of the Logos Son of God who assisted Him in the work of salvation. Jacob Boehme viewed Sophia as a person related to Mary. This latter understanding is reflected in the liturgy of the Church, whose epistle readings for Marian feast days are taken from the Books of Wisdom.



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## INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF THE SOPHIA

The "Sophia" stands for the canonical adaptation of the Gnostic Great Mother: Latin Sapientia, Greek Sophia, the spirit of Female Wisdom. Sophia is symbolized by the Dove of Aphrodite (later transformed into a sign of the Holy Ghost).

**Answer for yourself:** What was seen descending upon Yeshua at his immersion? A dove or "the Sophia....the wisdom and power of God"? No wonder there are no miracles attributed to Yeshua before this time.

We grew up thinking that John the Baptist and Jesus saw some type of "white bird" descending upon Yeshua; but as we see this is Gnostic theology at its very core that passes again for "literalism" instead of the allegorical intended meaning of the earliest Gnostic Christians. Gnostics have always taught that at Jesus' immersion he received "the Christ" and it entered into his body. This is something that Rome never planned you understood; that the earliest followers of Jesus were Gnostics and not "literalists." That means the writer of this New Testament literature was Gnostic!

The Sophia once represented God's female soul, source of his power, just as Kali-Shakti served to vitalize the Hindu gods (Robert Graves, The White Goddess. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: p. 159).

The *Trattato Gnostico* said Sophia was God's mother, "the great revered Virgin in whom the Father was concealed from the begin-fling before He had created anything." **She was identified with Isis-Hathor, whose seven emanations gave each Egyptian his seven souls.** Irenaeus said Sophia like Hathor was the mother of the seven planetary spirits, whose names were listed in Gnostic papyri as the magic-working secret names of God (Francis Legge, Forerunner and Rivals of Christianity (2 vols). New York: University Books Inc. 1964, p. 2,69).

The Clementine Homilies called Sophia the All-Maternal Being, The Queen, Lady Wisdom. **Early Gnostic Christians held that, like Krishna and Shiva, or like Dionysus and Zeus, Christ and God together merged with Sophia as an androgyne: "The Son of Man agreed with Sophia, his consort, and revealed himself in a great light as bisexual. His male nature is called "the Savior," the begetter of all things, but his female, "Sophia, Mother of All"** (Marjorie Malvem, Venus in Sackcloth. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press. 1975. p. 43, 53).

A Gnostic creation myth said Sophia was born from the primordial female power Sige (Silence). **Sophia gave birth to a male spirit, Christ, and a female spirit, Achamoth.** The latter gave life to the elements and the terrestrial world, then brought forth a new god named Ildabaoth, Son of Darkness, along with five planetary spirits later regarded as emanations of Jehovah: Iao, Sabaoth, Adonai, Eloi, and Uraeus. These spirits produced archangels, angels, and finally men.

Ildabaoth or Jehovah forbade men to eat the fruit of knowledge, but his mother Achamoth sent her own spirit to earth in the form of the serpent Ophis to teach men to disobey the jealous god. The serpent was also called Christ, who taught Adam to eat the fruit of knowledge despite the god's prohibition (Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion. Boston: Beacon Press. 1963. p. 204).



Sophia sent Christ to earth again in the shape of her own totemic dove, to enter the man Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan. After Jesus died, Christ left his body and returned to heaven. Sophia gave Jesus a body of ether, and placed him in heaven to help collect souls (Francis Legge, Forerunner and Rivals of Christianity (2 vols). New York: University Books Inc. 1964, p. 2,69). Some said Jesus became Sophia's spouse and his glory depended on this sacred marriage; for he was only one of the Aeons, a minor spirit, the "common fruit" of the Pleroma (Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion. Boston: Beacon Press. 1963. p. 188).

Some said Sophia was also Jesus's mother, for she was the Virgin of Light whose spirit entered into the body of Mary to conceive him.

She also entered the body of Elizabeth to conceive John the Baptist. Some said Sophia was to God as Metis to Zeus: his "mind." But Sophia wasn't acceptable to the all-male church. Of the three mighty female powers in the Gnostic creation myth, all preceded Jehovah, and two of them opposed Jehovah as a tyrant, overruled his taboo, and saved humanity from ignorance. It was a version that the all male Pauline churches found lacking in appeal.

Nevertheless, Sophia was passionately adored by Eastern Christians. Her greatest shrine was erected in Constantinople during the 6th century A.D., and was one of the wonders of the world: the Church of Holy Sophia (Hagia Sophia).

Embarrassed by this magnificent monument to the Great Mother, Roman Christians claimed it was dedicated to a minor "virgin martyr," St. Sophia, whose phony legend lacked even a date. Despite her virginity she was the mother of three daughters, also "virgin martyrs": St. Faith, St. Hope, and St. Charity. The legend may have arisen in personification of the saying that Wisdom gives birth to Faith, Hope, and Charity. Hagiographers took it literally, confusing the three virtues with the three Charites. Catholic scholars now claim the church of Hagia Sophia was never dedicated to the Great Mother in any form, not even that of a female saint. They say its name-which means "Holy Female Wisdom" in plain Greek-really meant "Christ ~ the Word of God" (Donald Attwater, The Penguin Dictionary of Saints. Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1965. p. 127, 312).

Jewish "Wisdom" (Proverbs) literature owed much to the cult of Sophia, who was to reappear in medieval Jewish cabalism as the Shekina of God. Yet the 8th chapters of Proverbs urges the benefits of Sophia's worship:

*Prov 8:1-36 1 Doth not wisdom (Sophia) cry? and understanding put forth her (Sophia) voice? 2 She (Sophia) standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. 3 She (Sophia) crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. 4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. 5 O ye simple, understand wisdom (Sophia): and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. 6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. 7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. 9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. 11 For wisdom (Sophia) is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. 12 I wisdom (Sophia) dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. 13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. 14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom (Sophia): I am understanding; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. 17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. 18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. 20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: 21 That I*

*may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. 22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. 32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. 33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. 34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (KJV)*

This was one side of a public-relations war. Proverbs chapter 9 is the other side was - presented by the following chapter, wherein God scorned the worship of the Goddess:

*Sophia hath budded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts: she hath mingled her wine: she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. . . [but] the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me [God] thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. . . A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.. . . But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell (Holy Bible, King James - version).*

The "high places of the city" meant temples, therefore the "woman" was the Goddess, who met with much resistance from followers of the God. Yet she was still in evidence during the Middle Ages, as Sophia-Sapientia, Lady Wisdom, ruling deity of the Gnostic philosophers who said the World Soul was born of her smile.





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# GNOSTICISM & FEMININE IMAGERY...THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SOPHIA

Simply said Gnosticism means "Knowledge." Some scholars teach that Gnosticism was a general term for mystery cults of the early Christian era and for derivative heresies of the medieval period. Yet you can trace Gnosticism all the way back to Egypt for the very same concepts concerning cosmology, creation, and God find their origin there. Their "knowledge" meant secrets of the after-life, spells and words of power required for advantageous placement in heaven, and revelations of the true nature of God. Leading Gnostic sects focused on the Great Mother and her Dying God-e.g., Eleusinian, Orphic, and Osirian mysteries. Important for our understanding is that Gnostic teachings concerning the dying and rising of gods was an allegory of the descent of the soul into matter and its loss of its real identity within mankind. This "spiritual resurrection" of the gods was again an "allegory" of the awakening within mankind of his self-knowledge of who he truly was: God within a human body. When you take a second to ponder this you should realize that God is within each of us as His creation. This is actually nothing new in many respects from what Christians teach. But there are great differences as we shall see. Angus says Gnosticism was "for over half a millennium the approach to religion for thoughtful minds" (Angus, *The Mystery Religions*, New York: Dover Press, 1975, vii). As stated these Gnostic religious beliefs concerning cosmology can be traced back to Egypt who gives mankind their earliest understanding of God (any of Moustafa Gadalla's books reveal this without a doubt [Egyptian Harmony, Historical Deception: The Untold Story Of Ancient Egypt]).

Tantric-style meditation and sexual rites figured in western Gnosticism, including sects that were fundamentally Christian. As the ultimate aim of Tantric yoga was to enter the primal realm of Silence, a feminine power enfolding the original Creative Word, the Logos, so Gnostic Christians sought communion with the Goddess Sige (Silence) who dwelt at the beginning of all things (Campbell, *Myths To Live By*, New York: Viking Press, 1972, p. 12). She gave birth to Sophia (Wisdom, or Knowledge), the Gnostic Great Mother, both spouse and mother of God.

Some Gnostics adopted the Oriental idea of the world soul, identified with Sophia, sometimes in androgynous communion with God. This was the view of the church father Origen, who was revered in his time but three centuries later excommunicated for holding heretical beliefs (*Bardo Thodol* (W.Y. Evans-Wentz, trans.), London: Oxford University Press, 1927, 234). He said, "As our body while consisting of human members is yet held together by one soul, so the universe is to be thought of as an immense living being which is held together by one soul" (Ralph Shirley, *Occultists and Mystics of all Ages*, New York: University Books Inc., 1972, p. 46). The trouble with the world soul from the Christian point of view was that it mingled the blessed with the damned in one divine spirit, preventing the separation of sheep and goats that was thought necessary at doomsday.

The orthodox Roman Western church especially objected to Gnostic feminine imagery (the principle of the Sophia). It was impossible to see God deserving the Great Mother's punishment, as the Gnostics said he did. Thus later Christians denounced the Gnostics as firstborn of Satan, ravaging wolves, demoniacs, atheists, robbers, pirates, beasts in human shape, and dealers in deadly poison-typical of the insults Christian traded with Christian in those times (Francis Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity* (2 vols.), New York: University Books Inc., 1964, 2, 10).

From the 4th to the 8th centuries, the church incessantly persecuted Gnostic minorities. Nevertheless, "Secret fraternities perpetuated the doctrines of Gnosticism and the illuminism of the Gnostic religions for many centuries after their supposed disappearance" (Arthur E. Waite, *Occult Sciences*, Secaucus, N.J.: University Books Inc., 1974, p. 195). Gnostic cult objects have been found throughout Sicily, Spain, and southern France, especially the *coifrets gnostiques* or sacred boxes, like Greek *cistae* or Semitic "arks," dating from the early Middle Ages (Emma Jung & Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Grail Legend*, New York: G.F. Putnam's Sons, 1970, p. 137).

Church fathers (anti-Gnostics) were particularly offended by the Gnosticism's propensity to admit women to ecclesiastical rank: "All initiates, men and women alike. . . might be elected to serve as *priest, bishop, or prophet.*" Tertullian reported with horror that Gnostic women "teach, they engage in discussion; they exorcise; they cure." This shows their anti-Gnostic "patriarchial" attitudes as opposed to the "matriarchial" ideas of Gnosticism. They even baptized, showing that they had episcopal status. "They all have access equally, they listen equally, they pray equally-even pagans, if any happen to come...They also share the kiss of peace with all who come" (Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, New York: Random House, 1979, p. 42).

Some Gnostic groups went so far as to claim the true revelation of esoteric Christianity came through a woman, the "apostle to the apostles," Mary Magdalene, Jesus's beloved. Rome especially hated this belief yet take a look at the painting of the "Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci before you scoff and you will see that the original painting has a woman next to Jesus on his right hand side and not a male apostle. So Rome created a second copy of the painting with a man next to Jesus. Another forgery. There is hidden revelation here that Rome





tried to hide and burned to death thousands who believed in Gnosticism. This secret was hidden by the Cathars and Knights Templars under the disguise of Roman Christianity in order to survive the Roman purge of Gnostics. They prayed to a two-sexed deity addressed as Father and Mother, identified with Jesus and Mary. Irenaeus anathematized such groups, insisting they "repent" and submit themselves to him, so he could punish them with "advance discipline" that would save their souls (Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, New York: Random House, 1979, p. 46-49).

Don't be surprised if you have never noticed this before because there is a good reason. **In place of the "feminine" Last Supper has been a concerted effort to remove any and all traces of the Sophia/Mary Magdalene from the Last Supper by the many other paintings of the Last Supper which remove completely any woman from the event as evidenced below of just one of many painting that exist today that are "anti-Gnostic."**



Gnostic principles of enlightenment (that God entailed both masculine and feminine aspects as taught by Gnostics) were incorporated into bardic romance, mystery plays, and fairy tales early in the medieval period. Such sources maintained secrets of the Gnostic religions as allegories or bolic drama. Manichean Gnostics founded their own churches, separating themselves from Rome which they regarded as hopelessly materialistic. They claimed the God of the Roman church was really a devilish demiurge who made the material world to entrap human souls in evil (Francis Legge, Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity (2 vols.), New York: University Books Inc., 1964, 2,239).

**Gnostic traditions evolved the Catharan Christianity of southern France and Italy, which stimulated the bloody Albigenian crusade. Catharan churches claimed Jesus transmitted to them a secret Gnostic doctrine that overrode the dogmas of the Roman church.** Only the "inner man" would rise to heaven, so the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh was a lie. Baptism was useless. Marriage was unimportant. No one needed to be celibate except the "perfected" ones, who renounced the life of the senses as eastern yogis did. The Inquisition accused the Cathars of calling the Roman church names, such as Mother of Fornication, Babylon the Great Whore, the Devil's Basilica, and Satan's Synagogue.

Other strands of Gnosticism ran through astrology, alchemy, Hermetic magic, and occultism. Insofar as the sought-after knowledge was the natural science that alchemists and sorcerers were beginning to discover (or rediscover), the church opposed it as destructive to the faith. **St. Augustine had firmly censured "the vain and curious desire of investigation, known as knowledge and science." Yet Hermes Trismegistus, the half-acknowledged god of medieval alchemists and occultists, had been praised by Lactantius as the revealer of "almost the whole verity."** Women were involved, too, in the pursuit of natural science. Women were closely associated with the origins of alchemical/ mystical gnosis: Theosebia, Mary the Jewess, one who called herself Cleopatra, another who called herself Isis (Kurt Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion, New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1948, p. 80-81,88).

Rediscovery of pagan writings had brought **Isis** back into an influential, if secret, prominence. **The Hellenistic world identified "Isis of the Myriad Names" with every other female divinity** (Elise Boulding, The Underside Of History. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1976, p. 252). **Medieval occultists in turn found her glorified in the writings of Plutarch and identified her with the World Soul, or Sophia.** She appeared in numerous occult books as the Naked Goddess crowned with stars, her dominion over land and sea symbolized by her right foot on the earth, her left foot in water. Her vulva was marked by a precisely positioned crescent moon, which a modern male scholar, with the curiously typical vague perception of female genitalia, chose to describe as covering her "womb" (Kurt Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion, New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1948, p. 45).

**On the whole it was a general rule that wherever the orthodox churches found any hint of female divinity or authority, there they**



**at once found heresy. Persecution of various kinds of Gnostics proved the rule over and over.** Both natural science and feminine spirituality came to birth only with great difficulty, against every obstacle that western patriarchy could devise to throw against them. The latter is, even now, not yet fully born.



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## THE GNOSTIC EXEGESIS OF GENESIS?

In reading a book sometime back I remember reading how Elaine H. Pagels, the scholar who has contributed more than any other to the popular interest in Gnosticism, found herself in the capital city of Sudan holding a discussion with the foreign minister of that country. This distinguished person, a member of the Dinka tribe, told her how the **creation myth of his people has exerted a lasting influence on many aspects of their social and cultural life.** It was related that shortly thereafter, Pagels was looking through a copy of *Time* magazine in which several letters to the editor took issue with an earlier article on the changing social mores of America. To her surprise, many of these letters referred to the story of Adam and Eve to argue for the desirable code of behavior. The letters consistently justified the morals and ethics of present times by referring to the creation story recorded in Genesis. Not only did this tribe in the Sudan, called the Dinka, but also Americans are still influenced by their creation myth. Pagels realized that Americans and Dinka tribesmen are not so very different; **the creation myths of both are still vital and relevant today.**

Most Westerners assume that Western culture has only one creation myth: the one in the first three chapters of Genesis. **Few seem to be aware that there is an alternative-the creation myth of the Gnostics.** This myth may strike us as novel and startling, yet it offers views of the creation and of our lives that are well worth considering.

William Blake, the Gnostic poet of the early nineteenth century, wrote: "*Both read the Bible day and night, but you read black where I read white.*" Similar words might have been uttered by early Gnostics about their opponents in the ranks of Judaism and "literalistic" Christianity. **The non-Gnostic, or orthodox, view in early Christendom regarded most of the Bible, particularly Genesis, as history with a moral. Adam and Eve were historical personages** whose tragic transgression resulted in the Fall, and from their Fall later human beings were to learn portentous moral lessons. One consequence of this reading of Genesis was the ambivalent and worse than ambivalent status of women, who were regarded as Eve's co-conspirators in disobedience in Paradise. Tertullian, one of the church fathers who despised the Gnostics, wrote thus to a group of Christian women:

*You are the devil's gateway.. . You are she who persuaded him whom the devil did not dare attack.. . . Do you know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on your sex lives on in this age; the guilt, necessarily, lives on too. (De Cufu Feminarum 1.12)*

This anti-feminine "bias" finds life in the church down through history and often even today and it has always struck me as strange that since Gnosticism valued the equality of women with men and since Paul often send his Epistles by way of women I felt it strange that this same Paul would censure women in the church so much.

**Answer for yourself:** Just where do we find these anti-feminine comments of Paul? Well some of your guessed it; the later forgeries of the Pastoral Epistles that modern scholarship teach us is not from the hand of Paul but from the hand of "orthodox" forgers of later Patriarchal Christianity.

## GNOSTICISM AND GENESIS



The traditional interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve is that they disobeyed God by eating the forbidden apple, which is the origin of Original Sin. We, as traditional Christians in Western Christianity, grow up being taught that this story is "literal" truth and that Adam and Eve were "two" individual persons. Yet many scholars and historical exegesis of these passages from Genesis present a totally different interpretation of Adam and Eve. It might shock you to find out that the earliest Christians also saw Adam and Eve not as "two" separate persons. In truth this "allegory" symbolizes the major step in our evolution from animal to human, a transition which spanned millions of years.

Occasionally people refer to Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge. They leave off the "of good and evil part", which is crucial. The Biblical passage clearly states that they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If it were merely the tree of knowledge, the passage would make no sense whatsoever. God said: *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Later, the Serpent assured Eve that what God had told her was untrue, and that her fears were unfounded: *Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods . . . . Adam and Eve ate the apple, and when God realized this, He said: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you really understand what you just read?

God just confirmed that what the Serpent had said when he tempted Eve. God just confirmed that what the Serpent said was, in fact, true. Now they have souls, and their consciousness lives forever, even after their bodies are gone. They have become as one of us.

In the traditional interpretation, the Serpent is considered wicked. Its plain from the text that the Serpent was perfectly truthful in everything he said to Adam and Eve, and the fact that he was telling the truth is somehow overlooked, as is the fact that God deceived them, at least until the point at which they ate the apple. This is an inescapable conclusion, and God admits as much later on. The fact that God lied to them is also ignored or glossed over by the traditional interpretation.

**Answer for yourself:** Who is this "God" that would deceive and lie? Is this the same "God" of Genesis chapter one or a different one? Well the Gnostics tell us but few listen.

God told Adam and Eve if they ate from that one tree, they would die. But clearly, they ate from the tree, and they didn't die!! It could be argued that, in the very broadest sense of the word, that they did die, the change in them being so great, their former selves and their former lives being lost forever. However, a stronger case could be made that God simply deceived them. Maybe it was for their own good, but He deceived them, nevertheless. God goes on to confirm everything the Serpent predicted, and Adam and Eve became as gods.

**Answer for yourself:** How did the Serpent know all these things?

What exactly is meant by knowledge of good and evil? It means morality, a distinctly human trait. It means the entire array of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors that goes along with it, such as the assumption of free-will, desire for approval and respect, fear of rejection, guilt, pride, envy, admiration, desire for revenge, ambition, anxiety, shame, remorse, love-- in short, all the emotions that make up the glue holding human social groups together, motivating members to suppress hostile impulses, forgo selfish interests, and work for the common good. Eventually, this leads to the development of civilization, along with its numerous ramifications.

Acquiring the knowledge of good and evil means evolving from animals to human beings. Becoming human was both a blessing and a curse. There was much to be gained from it--as the Serpent said, "your eyes shall be opened". But it entailed a steep price. God said to Eve, "I will increase your labor and in labor you shall bear

children." Why specifically that? Because becoming human meant becoming more intelligent, and in order to do that, their brains had to grow larger, resulting in extremely painful births which lower primates, with smaller head-to-body ratios, do not experience. This evolution of larger brains, along with an unavoidable increase in pain during childbirth, is at the very heart of the process of becoming human.

Before, they were naked, but unashamed, their sexuality uninhibited, like animals. Afterwards, they suddenly realized they were naked, and they stitched loincloths from fig leaves. Strong social restrictions on sexual behavior characterize any civilized people, and make up an integral part of the whole cluster of moral beliefs and behaviors that distinguish us from lower animals.

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden, they began the long, Faustian journey to human-hood, striving for understanding and mastery. God said to Adam, "You shall gain your bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground." No longer could he pluck fruit from a tree when he got hungry the way a monkey does. He cultivated the land, tended his flock, and put away food for hard times. He had the intelligence to envision the horror of famine, and he knew if he didn't work hard and plan wisely, he and his family would starve.

Back in the security and isolation of The Garden, good and evil were hardly salient concepts. But suddenly they become very real, and very potent forces, in human social groups where survival itself is uncertain. Good is whatever helps the group as a whole to survive and prosper--courage, honesty, unselfishness, intelligence, hard work. Evil is whatever harms the group--cowardice, dishonesty, selfishness, stupidity, and laziness.

The concepts of good and evil were integrated into the culture. Parents taught children to share, to be honest, and to consider the feelings of others. The concepts became internalized, along with all the whole vast array of emotions, both powerful and subtle, that go with them. For example, a man feels instinctive rage when he discovers his wife with another man. People feel spontaneous resentment upon witnessing the selfish or deceitful behavior of others. They experience fear and anxiety when they imagine themselves ostracized by the group for engaging in forbidden acts. And they feel pride after being praised for making a major contribution to the group. All of these pleasant and unpleasant emotions form a system of positive and negative reinforcement that molds the behavior of individuals and keeps the group working successfully as a unit.

The importance of the group is paramount, for we know that human beings must band together in order to survive. Groups with a highly developed morality survived in greater numbers than those without it, thus the genetic predisposition increased in the population. The most successful hunters and warriors received the admiration and gratitude of all, as did the most ingenious inventors--in short, those who contribute to the group. Thieves and murderers were executed or banished. Adolescent boys dreams of glory constituted specially potent fuel for the creative process that constructed technology and civilization. This entire dynamic, the network of prescriptions and proscriptions, facilitated group cooperation, cohesion, morale, progress, and ultimately, survival.

**Answer for yourself:** How does the story of Adam and Eve end? They (or shall I say "we") are still evolving.

**Answer for yourself:** Will we become more and more human--smarter, more compassionate, more creative--until eventually we become one with God? Maybe in some symbolic sense we will come full circle back to the Garden. The story of Adam and Eve is a beautiful and powerful allegory. I hope what I have suggested fits the original text from Genesis reasonably well, and that it at least provides an interesting alternative interpretation to the traditional one; in fact it is the traditional understanding of Adam and Eve of the earliest Gnostic Christians. But let us examine the role of Eve and the Serpent before we conclude these thoughts.

## MALE AND FEMALE

The Gnostic Christians, whose legacy of sacred literature we find in the splendid Nag Hammadi library, read Genesis not as history with a moral but as a myth with a meaning. These early Christians regarded Adam



**and Eve not as historical figures but as representatives of two intrapsychic principles present within every human being:**

- Adam was the dramatic embodiment of *psyche*, or "soul": the mind-emotion complex where thinking and feeling originate.
- Eve stood for *pneuma*, or "spirit," representing the higher, transcendental consciousness.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that there are two biblical accounts regarding the creation of the first woman. One tells us that Eve was created out of Adam's rib (Gen. 2.21); the other, that God created the first human pair, male and female, in his own image (Gen. 1.26-27). The second account suggests that the Creator God himself has a dual nature, combining male and female characteristics. The Gnostics generally endorsed this version and developed various interpretations of it. This version accords equality to the woman, while the Adam's-rib version makes her subordinate to the man.

For the ancient Gnostics, the conventional image of Eve was not credible. That image presented her as the one who was led astray by the evil serpent and who, with her feminine seductive charm, persuaded Adam to disobey God. In their view, Eve was not a gullible dumbbell turned persuasive temptress; rather, she was a wise woman, a true daughter of Sophia, the celestial Wisdom. In this capacity, she was the one who awakened the sleeping Adam. Thus in the Apocryphon of John, Eve says:

*I entered into the midst of the dungeon which is the prison of the body. And I spoke thus: "He who hears, let him arise from the deep sleep." And then he [Adam] wept and shed tears. . . . He spoke, asking: "Who is it that calls my name, and whence has this hope come unto me, while I am in the chains of this prison?" And I spoke thus: "I am the foreknowledge of pure light; I am the thought of the undefiled spirit.. . . Arise and remember. . . and follow your root which is I and beware of the deep sleep" (Stephan Hoeller, Gnosticism: New Light On The Ancient Tradition Of Inner Knowledge, Quest Books, 2002, p. 27).*

In another scripture, *On the Origin of the World*, **Eve is presented as the daughter, and especially the messenger, of the divine Sophia.** It is in the capacity of messenger that she comes as an instructor to Adam and raises him up from his sleep of unconsciousness. In most Gnostic scriptures, Eve appears as Adam's superior. The conclusion drawn from these texts is obviously different from that of church fathers such as Tertullian: man is indebted to woman for bringing him to life and to consciousness. When one studies Judaism one finds that Judaism teaches that "woman" is a higher creation than a man since every creation of God as detailed chronologically in Genesis follows a pattern of heightened "greatness"; culminating with God's highest creation before He finished and that being "woman". One cannot help but wonder how the Western attitude toward women might have developed had the Gnostic view of Eve been the widely accepted view.

## SNAKES...WHAT ABOUT SNAKES?

Eve's mistake, the orthodox view tells us, was that she listened to the evil serpent, who persuaded her that the fruit of the tree would make both herself and Adam wise and immortal. A treatise from the Nag Hammadi Gnostic collection, *The Testimony of Truth*, reverses this interpretation. Far from an embodiment of evil, the serpent is considered the wisest creature in Paradise. The text extols the wisdom of the serpent and casts serious aspersions on the Creator, asking: "What sort is he then, this God?" It answers that God's prohibition concerning the fruit of the tree is motivated by envy, because he does not wish humans to awaken to higher knowledge.

Neither are the threats and anger of the Old Testament Creator God left without reproach. *The Testimony of*

**Truth** tells us that he has shown himself to be "an envious slanderer," a jealous God who inflicts cruel and unjust punishment on those who displease him. The text comments: *"But these are the things he said (and did) to those who believe in him and serve him."* The clear implication is that with a God like this, one needs no enemies, and perhaps no devil either.

Another scripture from the same collection, *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, informs us that not only Eve but also the serpent was inspired and guided by the divine Sophia. Sophia allowed her wisdom to enter the serpent, who thereby became a teacher and then taught Adam and Eve about their true source. They came to understand that they were not lowly beings created by the Demiurge (in this case, the secondary Creator in the Genesis story), but rather, that their spiritual selves had originated beyond this world, in the fullness of the ultimate Godhead.

While the mainstream version of Genesis says that after eating the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve fell from paradisiacal grace, the Gnostic Christian version says that "their eyes were opened" which as you are learning is a metaphor for gnosis. Although cursed by the Demiurge and his archons, the first human pair had acquired the capacity for gnosis. They could pass this on to those of their descendants who were inclined to receive it. Eve thus passed on her gift of gnosis to her daughter Norea, and Adam gave the same to his third son, Seth.

## THE NATURE OF GNOSTIC EXEGESIS

Answer for yourself: What motivated the Gnostic interpreters of Genesis to proclaim such unusual versions of the creation story? Did they wish only to bitterly criticize the God of Israel, as the church fathers would have us believe? The several possible reasons are not necessarily mutually exclusive and in some cases are complementary.

First, the Gnostics, along with some other early Christians, looked upon the Old Testament God as an embarrassment. Members of the more intellectual echelons of early Christendom were people of a certain spiritual sophistication. Those conversant with the teachings of Plato, Philo, Plotinus, and similar teachers would have had a difficult time relating to a God expressing vengefulness, wrath, jealousy, tribal xenophobia, and dictatorial pretensions. How much more compatible with the genteel philosophy of Gnosticism was the kindly and noble character of Jesus and his teachings. The Gnostics might have simply drawn the logical consequences from this dichotomy and consigned the Old Testament God to the status of a demiurge, a lesser cosmic entity.

Second, as noted earlier, the Gnostics were inclined to interpret the old scriptures symbolically. Many scholars today realize that the Gnostics taught that the story of the Fall was a symbol for the human existential situation, not a recounting of a historical event. The "Fall", as many scholars write, represented a fall from the state of dreaming innocence, a kind of awakening from potentiality to actuality-an interpretation not unlike the Gnostic one we considered earlier above. Scholars like P. Tillich endorse a concept closely resembling the Gnostic idea of "two Gods" when he speaks of "the God above God."

Third, the Gnostic interpretations of Genesis may have been connected with Gnostic visionary experiences. It is believed that through their explorations and experiences of divine mysteries, the Gnostics might have come to understand that the deity spoken of in Genesis was not the true and only God, contrary to what the Bible claimed, and that there must be a God above him.

A transcendent God, minimally involved in the creation and management of the world, would have been plausible in the eyes of many people living in the Greco-Egyptian-Roman milieu of the first centuries of the Christian era. The highly personal and painfully flawed God of the Old Testament had lost credibility even with many Jews, as the example of the philosopher Philo of Alexandria proves. This learned man, though a devout Jew, employed his talents in whitewashing the concept of the God of Israel by investing it with Platonic ideas. These included divine hypostases (emanated aspects of the Deity) such as the Logos [Christ] and



**Sophia, both of which were held in high regard by the Gnostics. Taking an even more radical and forthcoming stand, the interpreters whose words are contained in the Nag Hammadi scriptures reasoned that a God who behaved as Genesis and other books of the Old Testament described must be a pretender and a usurper, not worthy of worship or obedience.**

The Gnostics understood the creation story in Genesis as mythic, and myths are necessarily subject to interpretation. Greek philosophers frequently looked upon their myths as allegories, while the common people saw them as a sort of quasi-history, and the *mystae* (initiates) of the Eleusinian and other mysteries brought the myths to life by way of visionary experiences. There is no reason to believe that the Gnostics approached myths in a manner substantially different from these.

**Present-day liberal biblical scholars tend to view the biblical tales as mythic stories that people invented to try to explain the world around and above them.** If this view is accurate, then the contradictions in the creation myth of Genesis are no more than reflections of the contradictions implicit in life generally. But the Gnostics, along with many other mystical philosophers of the ancient world, viewed mythic reality differently. They were more interested in understanding and realizing the world within than in explaining the world around and above them. The world within pointed to the world beyond, to transcendence, which was all-important. The myths of the Gnostics are designed to stimulate experiences in which the individual soul transcends the world's limitations. To transcend, in their view, means to go beyond the limitations not only of materiality but also of mind. It is in the realm of psyche that contemporary psychologists have discovered the analogues of what the Gnostics called the archons and the Demiurge. As C. G. Jung differentiated between the Self and the ego-the two "gods" in the psyche-so the Gnostics spoke of two gods, one transcendental, the other a bumbling secondary deity. Depth psychology seems to shed more light on the Gnostic understanding of the Judeo-Christian creation myth than liberal biblical scholarship does. Even so, there are probably meanings in these mythologems, or mythological themes, that elude the grasp of both psychologist and Bible scholar.

It is relatively easy to perceive the Gnostics as blasphemous religious deviants as long as one does not think too deeply and logically about the nature and implications of such scriptures as the Book of Genesis. **It is also not difficult to convince oneself that the reprehensible character of the Creator described in these scriptures is in no way compatible with that of the Father of Jesus. The two-Gods doctrine of Gnosticism certainly speaks more clearly to the ethical and logical sense of the human mind than does mainstream Judeo-Christian monotheism with its desperate desire to gloss over the glaring contradictions alluded to here.**

As the child is father to the man, so the creation myths of various cultures leave their imprint on the histories of peoples and nations. The Gnostics apparently made a valiant attempt to free the youthful Western culture of their time from the shadow of the Judeo-Christian creation myth. If the alternative myth they suggested seems radical to us, it is only because we have been accustomed to the Genesis version for so many centuries. Many of the implications of the Gnostic version are in fact potentially useful for the culture of the twenty-first century. Perhaps the time has come to transvalue the Western creation myth, and if so, Gnosticism may serve as our helper and ally.



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# THE CONNECTION BETWEEN "THE CHRIST" AND "SOPHIA": GOD'S WISDOM PERSONIFIED

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that the Pauline "Christ" was originally understood as a "Cosmic Godman Intermediary" as taught by Gnosticism and that Paul did not ever intended that this "Christ" be understood in "human terms?" I bet you didn't. But his idea of an "incarnated Christ" within only one man; ie., Jesus, is the idea which we were taught growing up in Christianity. We are taught that the references to this "Christ" in the Pauline corpus of epistles plus others was always a reference to Jesus of Nazareth.

**Answer for yourself:** But was this "Christ" originally understood that way by the earliest Christians; even the followers of Jesus before these ideas of "the Christ" was literalized by Rome?

The reasons for such lack of insight concerning this "Christ" as understood by the earliest Christians has multiple answers; one of which is the almost total lack of understanding of the original concept of "the Christ" as taught by the earliest Gnostic Christians and as found in the First New Testament of Marcion before it was altered by proto-Catholics such as Ignatius, Irenaeus and other following 180 C.E. whereby a "human Christ" in the form of Jesus was written into forged epistles in Paul's and other Apostle's names in order to make it appear that they were "anti-Gnostic" when in reality the reverse is true. It is time we examine this issue in detail; especially the relationship between "the Christ," "the Logos," and "the Sophia."

## THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE WISDOM OF GOD

**Sophia, the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Hochmah" is the feminine personification of Wisdom in the Pentateuch. She is neither a goddess nor a new age creation of feminist theologians. She was a real biblical person with more material on her in the OT (with Apocrypha) than anyone in the scriptures, except God, Job, Moses and David.**

One reason we little consider Sophia, even in readings of the Old Testament, is that English translations usually translate the feminine "Sophia" into the abstract "Wisdom". **Although the Greek and Hebrew words were fully feminine, the English is not.** The fullest development of her is in the so-called "Wisdom Books" of the apocrypha in the Greek Pentateuch that were canonized into Christian Scripture and are still used by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches. Sophia dominates the first nine chapters of Proverbs and is found in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the Hebrew tradition, Sophia was considered to have been with God from the beginning of Creation. In Proverbs 8:27-51, Sophia says:

*When God set the heavens in place, I was present, When God drew a ring on the surface of the deep, When God fixed the clouds above, When God fixed fast the wells of the deep, when God assigned the sea its limits-and the waters will not invade the land, when God established the foundations of the earth. I was by God's side, a master craftswoman, delighting God day after day, ever at play by*



*Godus side, at play everywhere in God's domain, delighting to be with the children of humanity.*

**Sophia, in the biblical creation was not a god, but was a divine being.** It is not clear that she was uncreated : the word used to refer to her creation also means "acquired" by God.

*Proverbs 8:22 -"God created me [acquired me] (Sophia) when God's purpose first unfolded."*

*Ecclesiasticus 1:14 -"before all things, Sophia was created."*

She serves at the heart of the creative process, as Wisdom and as Teacher who was sent by God to save humanity. The book of Wisdom speaks to her divinity (7:25-26):

*She is the breath of God's power and a stream of pure glory of the Almighty.*

This is why nothing polluted enters her.

For she mirrors God's energy completely, and she images God's goodness.

Those familiar with the Jewish tradition of Messiah know that it contrasts with the Christian tradition of Messiah by expecting a king, a righteous mortal who fulfills certain requirements (establishing a new reign of justice and peace for Israel), not involving Incarnation, resurrection or divinity. **Certain apocalyptic Jewish groups like the Essenes did allow for the possibility of a divine being however. Today the Essene's theology of their Cosmic Godman has been totally discredited not only by historic events or the lack of them as expected by the Essenes but their forgery of the existing Hebrew Scriptures where such concepts were written in among the Divine passages.**

**The identification of Jesus with Sophia, and the adaptation of Sophia characteristics into the Messiah definition, lies at the heart of almost all of the various New Testament Christologies.** To quote various authors:

*Almost every major New Testament portrait of Jesus depends upon the implicit combination of the Messiah and Sophia figures.... Jesus's crucifixion fits into the picture of Sophia calling vainly to humanity, and then going back to God without having visibly changed things. If one saw Jesus as Sophia, Jesus's lack of kingly success was no longer a problem but a confirmation of his divine calling....When a New Testament author such as [John]...concentrates on Jesus as Messiah, the Messiah figure is changed to incorporate some of the crucial Sophia characteristics [such as] pre-existent creative activity and foreknowledge of God.*

**Paul explicitly identifies Jesus with Sophia in 1st Corinthians 1:23-25,30:**

*"By God's action, Jesus Christ has become our Sophia." Then following, in 2:6-8, "But still we have a Sophia to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true....The hidden Sophia of God which we teach in our mysteries is the Sophia that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began...."*

John more directly incorporates Sophia scriptures into his description of Jesus. Sophia's statement (Ecc. 24:8)

*"Then the creator of all things instructed me...'Pitch your tent in Jacob, and make Israel your inheritance'becomes in John 1:14, 'The Word was made flesh, and pitched his tent among us.'"*

Extensive references in Paul, John and the Synoptic Gospels are given.

**Answer for yourself:** So why do we not use the term "Sophia" often today?

**Thank Gnosticism, which rejected Jesus's humanity and crucifixion while boldly proclaiming his identification with Sophia. The writers of the Gospels had no wish to identify with the Gnostic heresy and often muted the connection while they explored it. Further, thank the church fathers of the Patristic Age who preferred the male "Logos" when describing Christ in order to avoid gender confusion. Philo, who at first equated Sophia with Logos, "substituted Logos for Sophia, until the masculine person of the Logos has taken over most of Sophia's divine roles including the firstborn image of God, the principle of order and the intermediary between God and humanity. Sophia's powers are restricted and she is limited to Heaven..."(pl 1)**

**Attempts have been made to push the divine person of Sophia to the sidelines in both Christian and Jewish theology. In Judaism, the medieval writers of the Kaballah concentrated on the masculine aspects of the *sefiroth* (the 13 aspects of God) and relegated Sophia to an inferior sphere than that she had heretofore occupied. Roman Catholicism explicitly associated Old Testament Sophia texts with Mary or the Mother Church. In the Eastern Church, Sophia survives and is often associated liturgically with the Holy Spirit and sometimes with Christ, himself.**

**The book concludes with a discussion of Sophia in modern theology and the need for an explicitly female figure in God's image. The New Testament authors saw little problem with associating a female divinity with the male body of Jesus in the Resurrected Christ. But the mystery has presented problems as Christianity has been translated into a more rationalized western religion. And the female figure was denigrated as Christianity after Christ was shaped by a gentile culture that was, if anything, more partriarchal than the culture of first century Jerusalem.**





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# SOPHIA...THE CHRIST...AND JESUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mention has already been made that the producer of the First New Testament was Marcion the Gnostic. We have seen that the Gnostics had beliefs about God that often were taught through allegory since defining the indefinable God was difficult. Creation and man's relationship to this First Cause was as well expressed often through the means of allegory. We look now a little deeper into what men like Marcion and other Gnostics understood about the Sophia, "the Christ", and Jesus of the New Testament.

As stated above in the beginning, there was the Unknowable All who was best understood as the alien super-consciousness. This Cosmic Intelligent Consciousness had many names. Under the name "Abraxas" second century Gnostics understood this Cosmic Consciousness to refer to the Supreme Being or god whom they worshipped. They believed that Jesus Christ emanated from Abraxas and was a phantom while here on earth. They believed the name contained great mysteries because it contained the seven Greek letters when computed numerically equaled the number 365, which is the number of days in the year. It was further believed that Abraxas commanded 365 gods, each possessing a virtue, so there was a virtue for each day of the year. However, older mythologists place Abraxas among the Egyptian gods, while some demonologists cite him to be a demon with the head of a king and serpents forming his feet. He has been represented on amulets with a whip in his hand. The mystic word abracadabra was derived from his name. Many stones and gems were cut with his capricious symbolic markings, such as a human body having a fowl's or lion's heads, and snakes as limbs, which were worn by the Basilideans as amulets. Also, a favorite amulet bore the number 365. This Cosmic Consciousness was understood to contain all of creation without being a part of it.

Looking into his reflection, the Unknown God created Barbello, the womb of the universe, the mind of the Unknown God brimming with ideas. Barbello is also referred to as the *pleroma*, the heaven in which all spiritual beings reside. The Nag Hammadi Codices found near Qumran (like the Dead Sea scrolls), ancient centre of the Essenes, thought to have been written by Valentinus from Christian and Coptic texts, were a reflection of Platonism and Eastern dualism religion, Zoroastrianism. They have brought additional Gospels to the fore including that of Mary Magdalene - her true importance is said to have been excluded from the Bible by Peter (and the Roman Catholic Church) who denied Christ and detested women, especially educated ones, seeing them as the gateway to the Devil, even denying they had souls. According to Gnostic tradition Mary Magdalene was associated with wisdom (Sophia) represented by the sun, moon and halo of stars, becoming Athena to the Greeks. The female gnosis of Sophia (mother of Zoe (Life, thought to be EVE and Pandora), one of the AEONS, gnostic creators of all things, daughters of Barbello) was deemed to be the Holy Spirit, represented on Earth by Mary Magdalene.

The only children of Barbello and the Unknowable God were Sophia and Christ, in one sense male and female versions of the same being, the Immortal (Wo)Man. As you might expect they in turn gave birth to the Aeons, beings of light who reproduce infinitely by reflecting, each forming its own universe.

Sophia saw the reflection of Abraxas in the world of matter; wanting to possess it, Sophia descended into the world of matter and began trying to impart life to inert elements. She became hopelessly trapped in the mud, but, by sheer accident, managed to create Yaldabaoth, the God of the Old Testament. Realizing she had

acted in ignorance, she regained her composure and escaped back to the pleroma, erecting a veil between the spirit world and the world of matter. But she has left some of her essential light behind.

Finding himself the only being in existence, Yaldabaoth, the Demiurge, created the world. He also spawned his own offspring, the seven Rulers, animal-headed angels called Archons that help him rule his heavens:

- The first is Athoth, with the face of a lion;
- The second Eloaios, with the face of an ass;
- The third Astaphaios, with the face of a hyena;
- The fourth Yao, with the face of a seven-headed snake,
- The fifth Sabaoth, with the face of a dragon
- The sixth Adonin, with the face of an ape
- The seventh Sabbataios, with a face of shining flames of fire (*The Secret Gospel of John*, from Willis Barnestone's The Other Bible, p.56, pub. A.D. 1984.

These manifestations of the Demiurge are shadows, just as the Demiurge is himself a shadow of the Unknown God.

Gnostics believe that Sophia tricked Yaldabaoth into creating Adam, taunting him that a being would descend from the pleroma to destroy him; Yaldabaoth created the image she showed him, reasoning that a being he created would serve rather than threaten him. Sophia then sent her daughter Eve to help Adam; the Archons tried to separate the two, and even tried to rape Eve, before she escaped to hide in the Tree of Knowledge. Sophia then sent the serpent to help the humans; he enlightened them, and they rejected the Chief Ruler.

After the Flood, the Demiurge introduced many evils to plague humanity, including greed and the concept of scarcity. When Sophia used the Rulers' own prophets to spread seeds of enlightenment, they got together and raped Sophia, producing Fate, the origin of all inequities and great fears. Fate imposes, among other things, the Zodiac, forgetfulness, and the seasons.

In Gnostic theology, the Immortal Androgynous human incarnated on Earth as "the Christ"; being the original model on which Adam was based (second Adam), the way had been prepared for him by Yaldabaoth himself. Christ joined with the soul of Jesus of Nazareth. He taught what he could and, when the Rulers sent humanity to kill him on the cross, he flew away laughing. Christ was a light-being above "God" who came here to possess Jesus, using him like a "thophany" of sorts to teach humanity the truth: there is no "Hell" - the earth is the lowest plane, and we're just being reincarnated over and over. Christ taught humans how to free themselves from Yaldabaoth through self-knowledge and secret passwords. Yaldabaoth tried to kill him, but Christ switched bodies with an innocent bystander named Simon and flew away laughing while the Romans crucified the wrong guy. He reappeared once on Easter to the world, but he never stopped appearing to the gnostics, continually reminding them that matter is an illusion and the apocalypse is now.

According to Gnostic Christianity, everyone has their own "Christ," or spirit double; the significance of Jesus' story was that he had been possessed by Christ, resurrected before he died, and thus was able to escape from the world of created matter.





# THE SOPHIA TEXTS WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Several texts in the New Testament speak directly about Sophia-Wisdom. However some others can also be indirectly related to Her. One of the most important passages that refer specifically to Her is found in 1 Cor. 1:23-24,30).

*1 Cor 1:23-24 23 But we preach Christ (Logos) crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom (Sophia) of God. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom (Sophia), and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)*

Here we find in the mind of Paul a kind of Christological understanding that identifies Wisdom with the Logos. As the previous articles have indicated, Greek philosophy and the writings of Philo had begun to blur the distinctions between Sophia (the Idea of the ideas) and the Logos, and some Old Testament texts also placed God's Word and God's Wisdom in close proximity to one another (Ps. 33,6; Is. 55,11; Wisd. 9,1).

*Ps 33:6 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (KJV)*

*Isa 55:11 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (KJV)*

*Wisdom of Solomon 9:1 1 God of our fathers, merciful Lord, who hast made all things by thy word, )*

The Corinthians passage further contributed to identifying Sophia with the Logos among some Church Fathers and theologians.

## WISDOM'S DEEDS

God's wisdom is proved right by its results (Matt. 11,19).

Some interpret the Wisdom that is mentioned in the above passage as the person of Christ (i.e., Wisdom is understood in a Christological sense). This is, however, not the only interpretation. It is more likely that Wisdom is to be understood here as the mode and characteristic of God's working. Perhaps the text's meaning can best be paraphrased as follows: the Wisdom evidenced in the deeds (in the working) of God is

proved right, has shown itself to be right. The wise working of God cannot be characterized as false or incorrect, as the Pharisees complained to John about Jesus - that He was a friend of sinners (tax collectors and whores). Those who work in and from the Wisdom of God act correctly; their deeds are always right.

## THE WISDOM AND POWER OF GOD

*1 Cor 1:23-24 23 But we preach Christ (Logos) crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom (Sophia) of God. (KJV)*

The first part of the above passage ("he is the power of God and the wisdom of God") could be indicated as proof that Christ is the incarnated Wisdom of God. Such a Christological interpretation, however, does not really make sense. A better interpretation is that Christ is not personally the incarnated Wisdom, but instead the incarnated Word which brought forth Christ-the effect of the power and Wisdom of God.

*1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom (Sophia), and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)*

The second part of the above passage ("God made him our wisdom") must also not necessarily be interpreted Christologically. For here also Wisdom is not to be understood personally but instead effectively-as wisdom - filled life resulting from the incarnation. We are in Christ who God made our proclaimer of Wisdom - the wisdom - filled and God - pleasing way of life - and the one who effects our righteousness, holiness, and liberation. In this way it becomes clear that Wisdom is not to be understood personally and Christologically, but as God's or Christ's manner of working. Wisdom effects and brings forth wisdom - filled life and righteousness, holiness and liberation.

## SOPHIA POLYPOIKILOS

*Eph 3:8-11 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this text so important? This text is perhaps the clearest passage in the New Testament which understands and proclaims Wisdom in a personal manner as Sophia. For this reason it was also used to prove that Christ is the incarnated Sophia. But here also a Christological interpretation is not compelling. And especially because Wisdom is connected to the Church, a Sophian, Marian and ecclesiological interpretation of this important passage is appropriate.

The unfathomable riches of Christ, the mystery hidden since eternity in God the Creator (that "the Christ" dwells within every soul), was realized in the course of time so that the infinite variety of God's wisdom might be made known.

**Answer for yourself:** In what way? Through the Church in Jesus Christ - the Church as the Bride of Christ (the collective body of believers who are awakened to "the indwelling Christ within").

**Answer for yourself:** Is there another "mystery"? Yes.



**The mystery of Sophia - Wisdom is that She is the Bride of the Logos - Christ - Son of God. The betrothal of Wisdom with the Logos - Son of God is revealed by the fact that He ordained and took the Church as His Bride.**

## THE HEBREW WEDDING CEREMONY

When a young Jew male comes to the house of a prospective bride and meets with the father of the bride. They negotiate a price. If the father accepts the offer, the young couple drink a benediction which the father offers of wine. The couple are married in Spirit. The groom goes away to prepare a place but the bride doesn't know when He'll return. He has gone back to his fathers house to prepare a place for her. When he comes back it is usually at night with a shout "make way for the bride groom cometh" and the sound of the trump. He does not enter the house but waits in the street, the bride and her brides maids come out and the friends of the groom surround them and go back to his fathers house. He and her enter the Huppa they consummate the marriage physically. He rejoins the celebration and she remains protected, hidden... in the huppa for seven days.

What I just described is what Christ was referring to in John 14:1-3.

*John 14:1-4 1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (KJV)*

*Eph 5:25 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (KJV)*

When we consider that Mary is the beginning of the Church and its Mother, and that Mary is the incarnated Wisdom from whom the Son of God incarnated, then the mystery of Wisdom before history and Her relationship to the Son of God becomes clear. That mystery becomes visible and this passage makes sense. From the earthly reality we are able to infer conclusions about the eternal archetype and prehistoric existence of the Sophia.

*"The unfathomable wisdom of God is to be made known through the Church" - this is a short summary which clearly expresses the relationship of Wisdom to the Church. It does so because the Church is Wisdom incarnate - personally in Mary and collectively in the Body of Christ (the Church), whose spiritual mother is Mary. The explanation of this incarnation of Sophia is given by the ecclesiological context of Pauline theology: **the Church as the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ.** The Mariological connection is indicated by the theology of Luke (the Annunciation of Mary and the childhood of Jesus) and the theology of John (Wedding at Cana, Mary under the cross, the woman clothed with the sun).*

The Sophian texts of the Old and New Testaments exercised an important influence on the religious thinking of their times. It is interesting and significant for Sophiology to understand how Wisdom - Sophia was consequently seen and interpreted. This becomes apparent in understanding how Sophia was understood (for example by Philo of Alexandria and the Church Fathers, in particular Athanasius and Augustine).



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# THE SOPHIA ACCORDING TO PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Philo of Alexandria (13 B.C.E.-45 C.E.) was a key figure in the religious world of his time. He was a Jew familiar with Greek philosophy and the religious and Gnostic teachings of Egyptian Hellenism, and he used all of this knowledge in his approach to Jewish revelation.

The concepts of Sophia (Wisdom) and the Logos play an essential role in the religious and philosophical ideas of Philo. Research has shown that Philo initially distinguished between them but later confused their boundaries, understanding them as almost identical and thereby anticipating a development that continued into Christianity and climaxed with the Church Fathers.

If you desire to do your own studies into these very important concepts then let me recommend some important works on Philo are: *The Works of Philo*, C. D. Yonge, trans. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

## PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS RELATING TO SOPHIA

Philo repeatedly uses concepts from Greek philosophy like Logos, Sophia, Idea, Nous, Demiourgos and Eikon. It will be helpful to review their meanings before attempting to clarify how they were used philosophically

**Logos:** The word "Logos" means word and speech, and used figuratively, sense and reason (the sense or meaning of spoken words and the reason that conveys meaning). "Logos" also signifies a thinking, perceiving and volitional spirit, and as a conveyer of ideas, the Logos is the first cause and bearer of the "Ideas."

- **Idea:** The word "idea" originally meant the act of perceiving, but later came to signify the inner configuration of the object which reveals itself. Things are formed according to their "Ideas"; the "Idea" of each and every thing descends and incarnates into the material world. The descending "Idea" is called Logos noetos and the materialized idea Logos aisthetos, indicating the close relationship between "Logos" and "Idea" (*noetos* is related to the word *Nous* below and means conceivable; *aisthetos* means perceptible and is the base of words like "aesthetic"). The individual Ideas come from an *Idea idearum* (Idea of ideas) which is contained in, or is identical with, the *Nous* (who is also called Logos).
- **Nous:** *Nous* comes from the verb *noein*, which means "to think" or "reflect." "Nous" signifies sense, understanding, reason, thought, spirit, and intellect. It is usually understood as the spirit which permeates and orders everything, the foundation and bearer of the Ideas, and the Demiourgos, the master builder of the world.
- **Demiourgos:** This word is made up of *demios* which means "common" and "of the people," and *ourgos* which means "active" or "creative." Demiourgos signifies the universal creator, artisan or master builder of the world.
- **Eikon:** Derived from a verb meaning "the same," and signifies an image or likeness.



- **Sophia:** "Sophia" derives from the adjective *sophos*, which means wise, reasonable, adept, intelligent, and artful. "Sophia" signifies wisdom, cleverness, adeptness, and artistic skill. In the Greek world, "Sophia" later took on a philosophical content: understood as the "World Soul," She became the artful and intelligent Helper of the Demiourgos. As the World Soul, She contained the Ideas from which the cosmos is formed, Herself being the "Idea idearum," the Idea of ideas (Chokmah, or Wisdom, also took on a cosmological significance in the Old Testament alongside its original ethical and practical meaning).

**Answer for yourself:** Where do we find the first mention on the word "Logos"?

Heraclitus is the first to mention the word "Logos" around 500 B.C.E. The Logos, whose symbol is fire, is the wise and active World Reason who rules everything and yet is not understood by humanity.

For Plato (ca. 400 B.C.E.) and Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E.) the cosmic aspect of the Logos recedes into the background and is superseded by the logical dimension encompassed by "Nous" and "Idea."

According to Plato, in the beginning there is the Nous and the "Idea of ideas" containing all other ideas. The Nous then directs the primordial Idea to **descend into matter** where, as the World Spirit or World Soul **[Sophia]** (together with its Pronoia- providence, wisdom and power), it forms all things which constitute its body. The cosmos is the materialization of the "Idea of ideas" (and is good and beautiful, as Plato solemnly assures us at the end of his dialogue *Timaeus*). Aristotle subsequently coins the word *Entelechy* (the dynamic power residing in things which brings their goal to realization; intended sense and purpose) and substitutes it for the Platonic sense of "Idea."

What is important not to lose sight of in all of these descriptions is that the Pneuma (whose highest manifestation is the World Soul) and the cosmic Logos are virtually identical (although the Pneuma can also be understood as dependent on the Logos).

## PHILO'S TEACHING ABOUT SOPHIA

Stoicism began to imperceptibly shift the significance of various Greek philosophical concepts through the use of different names:

- The significance attached to the Nous was replaced by the Logos;
- the Idea idearum was replaced by concepts like Pneuma, World Soul, and Logos spermatikos (the seed-like Logos); and
- the Ideas by the Logoi spermatikoi (plural).

Thus the Logos concept was being used to describe all of the functions within the cosmos. The three cosmogonic concepts Nous, Idea idearum and Ideae, which previously had specific meanings, could all be expressed with various forms of the one word "Logos," resulting in a nominal identification between them. Johann Gottsberger notes the change that took place in the following way:

At first the Logos was identified with Zeus, Greek mythology's father of the gods. When Zeus was replaced by Hermes, the Logos of Stoicism took on features which qualified it more as a double of the Old Testament's Wisdom [the Idea idearum and World Soul] as far as the position of the Logos between God and the world was concerned.

Ruling over the entire realm of existence, the Logos became the leading philosophical concept during the Hellenistic period.

Philo was a devout Jew who was thoroughly familiar with Hebrew Scripture but also versed in Stoicism. It is understandable that he might have preferred to use the word "Logos" and even verbally identified Wisdom-Sophia with the Logos, but not in a real sense. Although the opinion arose that Philo considered the

two to be identical, this point of view does not hold up to a nuanced investigation.

Philo's Sophia teaching is based on the Books of Wisdom. He developed it further in his own way by using concepts like the Logos in particular. This was possible because the Old Testament did ascribe creative and redemption-bringing powers to God's Word (the Dabar or Memra of Yahveh). For example, Psalms indicates that "The word of the Lord created the heavens" (Ps. 33:6), and other Old Testament verses state:

*so is it with my word, issuing from my mouth; it will not return to me empty without accomplishing my purpose and succeeding in the task for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).*

*God of our forefathers, merciful Lord, who made all things by your word, and in your wisdom fashioned man (Wisd. 9,1).*

Philo's explanation of the act of creation is that Yahweh creates Sophia at the beginning of creation and then together with Her creates the entire universe:

*At all events we shall speak with justice, if we say that the Creator of the universe is also the father of his creation, and that the mother was the knowledge of the Creator (epistemene tou pepoiekotos) with whom God uniting, not as a man unites, became the father of creation. And this knowledge having received the seed of God, when the day of her travail arrived, brought forth her only and well-beloved son, perceptible by the external senses, namely this world. Accordingly wisdom is represented by some one of the beings of the divine company as speaking of herself in this manner: "God created me as the first of his works, and before the beginning of time did he establish me" (Prov. 8:22-23). For it was necessary that all the things which came under the head of the creation must be younger than the mother and nurse of the whole universe. Works of Philo, "On Drunkenness," 30-32, p. 209.*

The universe is the Son whose Father is Yahweh and whose Mother is Sophia. Sophia is God's Spouse and the Mother of the world. In line with Platonic thinking, the universe consists of its "Idea" and the substance in which it has materialized; in line with Stoic understanding, Philo names the "Idea" of the universe the Logos noetos and the visible form of the cosmos the Logos aisthetos (thereby using the Logos concept for his own cosmological system). The Idea of the universe is contained in the "Idea of ideas," i.e., in Sophia, who comes directly from Yahweh. This is mythologically expressed by the relationship between Mother and Son (the Logos noetos and aisthetos contained in the "Idea idearum" or Sophia). Yahweh has given creation to Sophia to care for maternally, which is why Philo calls Her the "Mother, Nourisher and Nurse of the universe." Philo was apparently also thinking of the maternal attributes and functions of the goddess Isis "who fills heaven and earth with Her beauty. . . who is great in heaven, powerful on earth.. from whom everything came into being and through whom everything exists and lives" (Burton Lee Mack, Logos and Sophia, p. 66). This task was given over to Isis by Her Father Re: "Her Father Re gave Her His mountain of light and His throne that She might rule His kingdom in heaven and on earth" (Logos and Sophia, p. 65). The Books of Wisdom describe Her similarly. Philo recalls that She is the "Mother, Wife, Teacher and Guide" of the sages, including Abraham, Jacob and Moses (The Works Of Philo, On Drunkenness, 31; On Flight and Finding, 52).

The Mother subsequently transfers many of Her caring attributes and functions to the Son. As the Son He is already similar in nature to Her and the Father. He is Sophia's *Eikon* or image and therewith Yahweh's also. Like Her, He is the beginning (*Arche*) and is also the "second God" (*deuteros Theos*). His nature is also light; for as God is the first light and the archetypal model of every light, so is God's most perfect word the light.

These are some of many examples which show how Philo transferred various attributes and functions to the Logos.



**B. Lang has indicated that though Philo by and large substituted the Logos or divine Word for Wisdom, he also continued to speak of Wisdom-Sophia's independent existence. Gottsberger also indicates that on the one hand Philo uses the words "Logos" and "Wisdom" in an identical way but on the other hand places them beside each other; and that he did not proclaim their identity but only their relationship.**

Philo presented his Sophia teaching through the use of Greek (and Egyptian) concepts. He used the concept of the Demiourgos by first eliminating objectional elements from it (in this case pantheistic and emanationist traces); and in this way he similarly incorporated other ideas into his own philosophical system. Though he used Greek expressions, he remained firmly grounded in the Jewish tradition.

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF PHILO'S SOPHIA TEACHING**

It is said that Philo exerted a unique influence on Christianity. **His magnificent reflections about God and the spiritual path were taken up without hesitation by the Church Fathers. Because he had transferred Sophia's functions and attributes to the Logos, it was possible for the viewpoint to arise that he understood the two of them to be identical.** Identifying Sophia with the Logos became a dominant perception; and this is attributable at least in part to the influence of Philo. By identifying the two with each other, Sophia's independent existence was denied, which caused confusion and stagnation as far as the development of Sophiology was concerned. It is necessary today to strive for a new orientation about Sophia and to take up the many indications given by persons like Augustine, Hildegard of Bingen, Jacob Boehme, Godfrey Arnold, Soloviev, Florenski, Bulgakov, and Teilhard de Chardin.



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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #1

I have said it before and it bears repeating; namely, "Archeology is your friend". We owe so much of our true knowledge of Christianity and our religious past today because of the efforts of these dedicated scientists that gave their lives and energy that the world might profit from the truth of its ancient past. Having said that let me introduce the reader to the Nag Hammadi library which is a collection of early Christian Gnostic texts discovered in the town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. That year, thirteen leather-bound papyrus codices buried in a sealed jar were found by local peasants. These codices have been collected and examined and undergone intense scrutiny by archeologist and theologians alike. The writings in these codices comprised 52 mostly Gnostic tractates (treatises), but they also include three works belonging to the Corpus Hermeticum and a partial translation of Plato's Republic. The codices are believed to be a library hidden by monks from the nearby monastery of St Pachomius when the possession of such banned writings denounced as heresy was made an offense. The zeal of Athanasius in extirpating non-canonical writings and the Theodosian decrees of the 390s may have motivated the hiding of such dangerous literature.

The contents of the codices were written in Coptic, though the works were probably all translations from Greek. Most famous of these works must be the Gospel of Thomas, of which the Nag Hammadi codices contain the only complete copy. After the discovery it was recognized that fragments of these sayings of Jesus appeared in manuscripts that had been discovered at Oxyrhynchus in 1898, and quotations were recognized in other early Christian sources. The 1st or 2nd century date of the lost Greek originals behind the Coptic translations is controverted, but the manuscripts themselves are from the 3rd and 4th centuries.

Along with the Dead Sea Scrolls the Nag Hammadi Library discovery has had earth-shaking repercussions regarding the traditional understanding of Christianity as taught by the Christian Church today. If the spectacular discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls enabled historians to completely rethink the religious context out of which the earliest Christian traditions emerged, these same historians were doubly enriched when the Nag Hammadi collection finally came to light. And although the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal a surprising variety in early Jewish piety, the Nag Hammadi writings illustrate an even greater diversity in the religious speculation and communal piety of early Christian groups.

Unfortunately, we know nothing of the history of the group who gathered together this particular collection of writings. We know only what we have been able to learn from the writings themselves. The twelve original codices each contained a number of shorter compositions or tractates, fifty-two in all. They are Coptic copies of writings that were originally composed in Greek. Coptic is a version of the ancient Egyptian language adapted to the Greek alphabet that was in use in Egypt during the early Christian period. These writings cover a wide variety of subjects, and they seem to have been composed originally by a number of different authors, at different times, and in a variety of locations.

The collection, now known as the Nag Hammadi Library, is of great importance for the understanding of the development of early Christian communities because it presents the social and religious perspectives of groups of Christians who did not prevail in the battles that eventually resulted in the formation of a single, unified



church. Their differences with more orthodox Christians covered a wide range of issues, including whether the death of this Jesus on a cross was "real" or but an "allegory", and whether women were among the true disciples of this "Jewish Christ" and, therefore, had the authority to teach and to baptize. As you can see the whole "Jesus Story" is revealed under these writings in a completely different light.

Before the emergence of the Nag Hammadi texts, the views expressed in such early Christian writings as the Gospel of Mary, the Apocryphon (secret teaching) of John, and the Dialogue of the Savior were known only from the distorted descriptions found in the writings of their opponents. Since these opponents were famous church leaders such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, it is not surprising that their writings were not preserved by the church. Because of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library, modern Christians have a much more complete picture of their spiritual family tree as well as the "beliefs" of these earliest "Christians" before the rise of Roman Orthodoxy.

**The common thread that unites the disparate writings of the Nag Hammadi collection is an emphasis on secret, saving knowledge (gnosis), as well as an other worldly estrangement from human society in general and a desire to withdraw from the corruption of the material world. But not only that they focus on many "secret teachings" concerning "the Soul" of man.**

Because early Christianity was so different than Christianity as it is practiced today, many scholars have said that the entire teachings of Jesus had more in common with Buddhism than it does with Christianity as it is practiced today. This is because the early Christian writings discovered in 1945 and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 has given scholars a better picture of the early Christians. **They were Jews who did not renounce their Jewish religion. They were believers in reincarnation and taught a special form of "resurrection" that had to do with becoming spiritually "born again."** They believed that Jesus was a very, very special man but not God. They believed that Jesus would return within their generation. As you will see, the evidence also shows that **the early Christians were much more believers in mysticism than probably most people are aware of today.**

**Answer for yourself:** What is meant by mysticism? Mysticism is best explained as an immediate consciousness of the transcendent or ultimate reality or God and is closely associated with a belief in the existence of realities beyond perceptual or intellectual apprehension that are central to being and directly accessible by subjective experience. Simply said it is a "religion" based on mystical communion with an ultimate reality whom we define as "One" or "God" or "Godhead".

The impact of the discovery of these Nag Hammadi documents discovered in December, 1945, which have today been defined as the earliest Christian writings which contained these many secrets of the early Christian religion as found in upper Egypt, have challenged the later traditional interpretations of "the Christ" as taught by the Roman Church for the last 1,700 years. These documents were again located in an area where many Jewish followers of "the Christ/Messiah" fled during the Roman invasion of Jerusalem. Undisturbed since their concealment almost two thousand years ago, these manuscripts of Christian mysticism rank in importance with the Dead Sea Scrolls. **Most astounding is that these writings affirm the existence of the doctrine of reincarnation being taught among the early Jews and Christians.** These Christian mystics, referred to as Christian Gnostics, were ultimately destroyed by the orthodox Church for being in their mind "heretics". Their sacred writings were destroyed and hidden with the belief that they would be revealed at an appropriate time in the future. The discovery in 1945 yielded writings that included some long lost gospels, some of which were written earlier than the known gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Now I want you to read a quote by Brian A. Bain, M.A., dealing with these Gnostic writings discovered in 1945: "Long considered to be heretical, ancient Gnostic Christian texts unearthed this century display compelling similarities between Gnostic conceptions of life and death and modern near-death experiences. The Gnostic texts devoted extensive tracts to what readers could expect to encounter when they died. Other passages make numerous allusions to near-death-like experiences that can be realized in this life, most notably the human encounter with a divine light. The Gnostic Christian literature gives us one more example of near death experiences and similar experiences in the ancient world." Wow!

Another interesting fact comes from Edgar Cayce who is known today as one of America's greatest psychics and who himself experienced a "near-death experience". He is quoted as saying that "Gnosticism is the highest form of Christianity".

The Christian Gnostics were regarded by some as a new Jewish sect who believed they had finally found the long-awaited Messiah and not a new religion. Some of the apostles became Gnostic and because of this, Christianity could well have grown up as a Gnostic religion had it not been for their eventual persecution by the organized Church centuries later. St. Augustine is the father of Western Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant since he was directly connected to Martin Luther and John Calvin. He would give Western Christianity its theological excuse for murder and genocide against heretics such as the Gnostics, Arians, Donatists, etc. Oddly, his theology originates with the Gnostics (Manichaeans). How sadly ironic.

Important for us to know and recognize now is that Gnostics believe that they have secret knowledge about God, the Soul, humanity and the rest of the universe of which the general population was unaware. Gnosticism became one of the three main belief systems within 1st century Christianity, and was noted for three factors which differed from the two other branches of Christianity:

- Their belief about God and His emanations, the Bible and the world which differed from those of other Christian groups.
- Tolerance of different religious beliefs within and outside of Gnosticism.
- Lack of discrimination against women.
- A belief that salvation is achieved through relational and experiential knowledge. In the words of The Gnostic Apostolic Church, humanity needs to be awakened and brought "to a realization of his true nature. Mankind is moving towards the Omega Point, the Great day when all must graduate or fall. This day is also the Day of Judgment in that only those who have entered the Path of Transfiguration and are being reborn can return to the Treasury of Light.

Scholars trace the core of Gnostic religious beliefs about God and the Metaphysical realm back through Jewish mysticism and Hellenistic mystery cults and Iranian religious dualism of Zoroastrianism all the way back past Babylonian to Egyptian religion and their knowledge of this Creator God.

**Answer for yourself:** What should that teach us? Namely, that since the beginning of recorded records that have been uncovered by archeology today and that are made available to us we find that mankind's awareness and knowledge of God as shared by these Ancients has a "core religious belief system" that remained intact down through thousands and thousands of years in which it changed little if any. Sure, the "names" for God changed and there are differences but one can detect that the core religious beliefs among nations remained basically the same. It appears to an illuminated study of comparative religion that there is a "thread of truth" from the beginning of the creation of mankind down through the histories of succeeding nations that was cherished and held to be sacred concerning this Divine Realm and its intersection with the physical plane of matter and man's existence. The definition of gnosis or "knowledge" as concerned with the Eternal and His embodiment in matter and "flesh" appears to have been with mankind since the beginning of the species and this knowledge can be traced and found in the rise and fall of nation after nation down through the corridors of history. In fact if we begin with Egypt and look down through history we find this "common thread" passing through nation after nation until the rise of Rome when all is then "reinterpreted" and given other meanings different from those held sacred before.

At the core of gnosticism is "a specific spiritual experience, grounded in vision and union, that does not lend itself to the language of theology and philosophy, but instead has a close affinity to and expresses itself through **myth**. In this context, the term "myth" does not mean stories that are not true, but rather, stories that embody truths of a different order than the dogmas of theology or the theories of philosophy" (Hoeller, Stephan A., Gnosticism New Light on the Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing, Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton Ill. 2002 p. 13. Thus, Hindu myths regarding Brahma or Krishna, secular gnostic myths that speak of the goddess "Sophia" or "Ennoia" (variously translated "wisdom" or "thought" who leaves the upper



realm to our lower realm, giving birth to an “abortion” the “Demiurge” or ruler of this world (Wand, J.W.C., A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500, Routledge, Great Britain, 1996, p. 43-52) and Christian myths based on reinterpretations of the Creation or Resurrection stories that cast Eve as wise and good, as well as the death and resurrection of Jesus and him not actually suffering at his death on this cross, can comfortably coexist in the family of gnosticism, as all these myths “embody truth” as seen through the “authority” of personal spiritual experience.

We can never know for sure, but we'll just have to sit in amazement as we reflect upon the Church of Rome's centuries of persecution and extermination of heretics, massive and efficient book-burning campaigns and an active attempt to rewrite history. This should make us want to know why these Gnostic peoples and their writings were systematically destroyed over the earliest centuries of the rise of the Roman Orthodox Church. We must be fully aware that much of what we are taught today that comes from the formation early Orthodox Roman Christian doctrine was formulated in reaction to these Gnostics and their knowledge of God as handed down by mankind since its creation. So what is the truth? That is why we have to study to find out when and where the "train jumped the tracks" so to speak if we ever hope to restore the truth to our lives today.

**Answer for yourself:** How much truth have we lost concerning God and the Soul that was held sacred by these Ancients and these Gnostics? Let us find out shall we?

[Let us continue in the second article in this series.](#)

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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #2

Any Christian who has paid attention to the readings of the gospels in church will realize that there are significant differences in their perspective on the nature of Jesus. A close reading of the four canonical gospels will reveal strikingly divergent portraits. For example, throughout John's gospel Jesus is declared to be a transcendent and divine being, perhaps most recognizably in 3:16, a verse favored by fervent fundamentalists everywhere: *"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."* In contrast, one of the most noticeable themes in the gospel of Mark is that of Jesus being a "hidden Messiah," a more human figure who speaks in riddles and only teaches to his disciples. It is not surprising, then, that the discovery of a set of Gnostic documents dating back to the first and second centuries that contained a radically different view of Jesus would arouse intense interest and add further fuel to the theological debate about who Jesus truly was.

Elaine Pagels, the Harrington Spear Paine professor of religion at Princeton University, delves into this controversy in her presentation entitled "Jesus and His Message in the Gnostic Gospels" that is based on her national award-winning book. The 45 minute lecture and 25 minute discussion period, recorded on audio and videotape at Bowdoin College in May of 1996 by Roger Leisner of Radio Free Maine, offers an excellent introduction to the topic that will challenge anyone's certain conclusions about Jesus.

The scriptures that have revolutionized our understanding of the origin of Christianity were unearthed accidentally in 1945 by a peasant digging for fertilizer at a place in the Egyptian desert called Nag Hammadi. The find consisted of 52 separate text written in Coptic, an ancient language translated from the Greek, some of which may have been composed a generation before the first gospel was authored in AD 70. The tract which had come to be known as the gospel of Thomas contains many sayings which parallel similar words attributed to Jesus in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, suggesting it may have been a source held in common by both of the later authors. However, there are also many unique and startling verses, like Thomas 108: *"Whoever drinks from my mouth will become as I am, and I will become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him."*

**Answer for yourself:** Could this be the teaching of the "Jewish Christ" whom we call Jesus today and could this be a secret teaching from "the Christ" of God that we have never heard or have explained to us yet today?

**Answer for yourself:** Are there "secret teachings" of Jesus and this "Jewish Christ" that exist today? Are they relevant and should we be as Christians and followers of "the Christ" aware of them? Will they impact our lives?

In order to consider this, Pagels and other modern scholars today take us back to the period just after the time allotted for this supposed death of a man named Jesus, a time when Christianity was "diverse in views and practices and full of competing value systems." Among the myriad of the followers of "the Christ/Messiah" in Israel were the Gnostics, a group so-called because they believed one could seek after God and find secret knowledge or wisdom by studying oneself (the Greek word gnosis literally means "those who know"). The



**Gnostics' appraisal of Christ's teachings was a stance we have come to associate today with the religions of the East, which are permeated by similar drive after personal enlightenment.**

The Gnostics believed that by investigating the source of sorrow, joy, love and hate, one could cultivate insight and discover God as the fountainhead of all of these states of being. The significance of Jesus is interpreted to be that of a model, one whose instruction to come and know oneself as he did will transform human beings into sons (and daughters) of God like him. Consistent with the scholarly consensus that Jesus' purpose was not to found a new religion centering its devotion upon him, the Gospel of Philip, a companion text to the gospel of Thomas, **urges followers not to become Christians, but rather new Christs.**

Pagels juxtaposes texts from the Gnostic and the canonical gospels to highlight the contrasts between them. Was Jesus the unique Son of God (as in John 10:9: ***"I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved"***), or was he not the source of all truth, but merely a guide to help us on our own way (as in the Gnostic Teaching of Sylvanus: ***"Knock upon yourself as a door...and you cannot get lost"***)? The two bodies of Scripture also hold rival accounts of the characteristics of the kingdom of God. The kingdom that Jesus proclaims in Mark 13 is due to arrive in the near future with a world-shattering cataclysm that will be recognized ahead of time by forbidding natural signs and social upheaval. In the gospel of Thomas, however, the good news of the kingdom of God is portrayed to be existing both outside and inside of people at a deep level that breaks free when our consciousness is transformed by the knowledge that we are all children of the living God.

What is interesting about the Gnostic gospels is that they do not deny what is said about Jesus in other gospels, but rather testify that they **contain secret teachings of Jesus as the Jewish Christ** that their authors believed needed to be preserved. Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyon in France, was one of many Church officials who denounced this literature circulating Europe and defended the four gospels that the Church had selected to be in the canon as the only authentic gospels--because "there are four principle winds, four pillars that hold up the sky, and four corners of the universe; therefore, it is only right that there be four gospels."

Pagels and others give a more rational explanation for why the Church deemed the Gnostic gospels to be dangerous and banned them. The coexistence of this Gnostic Theology alongside other views of Jesus' divinity was a direct challenge to the consolidating power structure of the Church. She elucidates that "As the creed, the hierarchy, and other components of the institution began to be set into place, there was a demand by the power-holders for organization and unity in thinking." The orthodox position that developed was aimed at preserving the cohesiveness of the early Christian movement in order that it might survive the state persecution of the Roman Empire. The Gnostic understanding of Jesus rendered the Church's existence unnecessary; one did not have to go through Jesus and the Church, but could approach God on one's own. The popes of later eras formulated Church dogma as extra ecclesia nulla salus ("outside the Church there is no salvation"). Irenaeus said elsewhere about the Gnostics, "Whatever good they are trying to do cannot repair the harm they are doing in cutting up the glorious body of Christ."

Indeed, the suppression of the Gnostic gospels fits the pattern of rational patriarchy that has marked the Church throughout the centuries. Unlike the dominant imagery of God (The Father) in the institutional Church, the Gnostic gospels recognize a feminine influence in God as Jesus' origin, and also affirm Jesus' upending of Jewish tradition by including women in his ministry. In addition, it seems clear that the Gnostics had some contact with Buddhism in the formation of their ideas. The Church's rigid demand for participation in sacraments and other externally focused actions has severely cropped the inner religious experience, precipitating many Christians to go outside the Church and add meditation practices to fill the void in their spiritual lives. The forced exclusion of these Gnostic elements have kept hidden from Christians many aspects of their faith--until now.

Pagels' clear and succinct talk leads non-scholars and students alike through illustrations from history and the texts to impart a deeper knowledge of the currents swirling around the figure of Jesus and the formation of the Church's orthodox doctrine of Christ that still persists today.

**Answer for yourself:** What did these earliest Gnostic Christians believe about this Jesus and "the Christ" and how did Rome later change all of this? What were these "secret teachings" of Jesus and "the Christ" as handed down since antiquity that Rome did not want us to know?

An important Christian Gnostic teaching was the "Logos" which in Greek is translated as "the image of the Word." It is an important concept found in the gospel of John 1:1: *"In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* It is important for us to understand that the Logos is the part of God that acts in the physical world. It is the perfect unity of the human and the divine. This is affirmed by John when he wrote that *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* When John stated that Jesus is the Logos, he is stating that Jesus, likened to a man, became the Logos, the Christ. This portrayal of "the Christ" as a man named "Jesus" is our example that we, as men and women, can become Christs as well and like this example of "Jesus" we can experience God's salvation (the name Jesus means "God saves"). These Gnostics understood what the Ancients of Egypt knew in the beginning of time, namely, that this Logos is the divine "spark" of God within humans (matter) that needs to be awakened in every man and woman in order for them to know their Godly origins and their purpose in existence as Souls on a journey and mission in this physical realm. Everyone has the "image of the Word (Logos)" within them and it is for this reason that Genesis describes humanity as created *"in the image and likeness of God."* The Logos is the divine Spirit in humanity. Now what I say next is very important and will be one of the major causes of Rome's destruction of the Gnostics and their teachings. By using the Christian Gnostic idea of the Logos, John is not only affirming the preexistence and divinity of God's Christ before becoming our example of incarnation, but he is affirming that all sons of God created in the "image of the Word" as Jesus our example, preexisted in the spirit realm with God as Souls before being born in earthly bodies. In other words, every human is an incarnation of the Logos in flesh (as is our Jesus example) and every human has the potential of becoming like Jesus (living a Jesus-like life); thus realizing in their own lives that they too can become a manifestation of the human-divine unity. Every human can be a "Christ" and because of this, every soul will eventually be drawn back to God. This is the goal for our Souls in their pilgrimage to this realm of existence. The Roman Church misunderstanding what the Logos was in John incorrectly concluded from received traditions hundreds of years old that this Jesus was a literal human being and ONLY he was "divine" and "the Christ" as the "Word made flesh". This was not the teaching of the Gnostics who never taught a "literal-historical" Jesus as the Christ. The orthodox Church either rejected or ignored this Christian Gnostic concept found in John. This may have been a factor when the gospel of John was almost rejected from New Testament canon when it was being put together. This was during a time when Christian Gnosticism became an enemy of the organized Church. Nevertheless, it was the idea of the preexistence of the Soul and the Christ and their corresponding doctrine of incarnation and reincarnation that the Roman Church had great difficulty with.

The Christian Gnostics emphasized spiritual knowledge rather than blind faith as the road to salvation. They indicated that they possessed secret knowledge (i.e., "gnosis" in Greek) concerning the hidden meaning of the "resurrection." Understand that Gnostics understood that Christ's resurrection is to be understood symbolically as the goal for all men and women in a spiritual sense and never interpreted literally as we have been taught since the rise of Rome. This was a part of the Gnostic's "secret teachings" of "the Christ" told through the medium and example of this Jesus which was handed down to them by the Jewish apostles of "the Christ". This special knowledge was restricted to people who were given the public teachings of Christianity before qualifying to be initiated and receive the secret teachings. In contrast, the very term "Catholic" means "universal", implying that anyone could become a member of the Church by adhering to the public teachings of faith and rituals. The Christian Gnostics were harsh critics of the orthodox Church. The Christian Gnostics accused the Church of watering down the gospel in order to popularize it for the masses. The orthodox Church stressed salvation through faith alone and by the rituals of the Church.

This secret gnosis emphasized spiritual "resurrection" (i.e., spiritual rebirth... "born again") and physical "resurrection" which is entirely different from what we are taught today. This "physical



**resurrection" of these earliest Gnostic Christians was a belief in "reincarnation" as opposed to a resurrection defined as people sleeping in their graves until it is time their corpses to crawl out of their graves at the last day.** This is what we have not been taught since the rise of Roman Orthodoxy. These earliest Jewish-Christian Gnostics held the view that if spiritual resurrection was not attained in one lifetime, then the soul would be subjected to as many reincarnations as it takes until spiritual rebirth is attained. One of the great Church leaders was Clement of Alexandria in Egypt (150-211 A.D.) who indicated that he possessed the secret teaching handed down from the apostles.

In the Gnostic text entitled The Secret Gospel of Mark, one of the Christian Gnostic texts discovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, describes Jesus performing secret initiation rituals. Before the discovery of this secret gospel, our only knowledge of it came from a letter written by Clement. Clement, one of our earliest Church Fathers, quotes from this secret gospel and refers to it as, *"a more spiritual gospel for the use of those who were being perfected."* He also states, *"It even yet is most carefully guarded [by the church at Alexandria], being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries."* Clement mentions elsewhere that Jesus revealed a secret teaching to those who were *"capable of receiving it and being molded by it"* He also affirmed that, *"The gnosis (secret knowledge) itself is that which has descended by transmission to a few, having been imparted unwritten by the apostles"* (Miscell. Book VI, Chapter 7).

This is just part of what we were never taught since the rise of the Roman Orthodox Church and their centuries of extermination of these earliest Gnostic Christians and their writings and teachings. The efforts of the Roman Church to destroy every trace of what they considered "heretical blasphemy" proved so successful that, until the discoveries at Nag Hammadi only 50 years ago, nearly all our information concerning alternative forms of early Christianity came from the massive orthodox attacks upon them and these are almost always "negative" and we now know by examining these archeological discoveries that they are just more Roman lies upon lies. Think with me for a second. When we examine why Rome desired a belief in bodily resurrection of the dead from their graves we find political motives behind such a belief. Such a religious doctrine of bodily resurrection serves an essential political function: it legitimizes the authority of certain men (in this case Roman Church authorities) who claim to exercise exclusive leadership over the churches as the successors of the apostle Peter. From the second century, the doctrine has served to validate the apostolic succession of bishops, the basis of papal authority to this day. The Church Fathers, who were links in that chain of succession, regularly appealed to apostolic succession as a test for whether Catholics or heretics had correct doctrine. Clearly, something other than Scripture had to be used as an ultimate test of "correct" doctrine in these cases. As we come to see then it was these Gnostic Christians who interpret resurrection in other ways which had a lesser claim to authority: when they claimed priority over the orthodox, they are denounced as heretics by those of the Roman church who are the real "heretics". Such irony!

Time for a little Egyptian religion and the truth as it existed for thousands and thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians conceived man and cosmos to be dual: firstly, the High God or Divine Mind arose out of the Primeval Waters of space at the beginning of manifestation. Space, symbolized by the Primeval Waters, contains the seeds and possibilities of all living things in their quiescent state. At the right moment for awakening, all will take up forms in accordance with inherent qualities. Or to express it in another way: the Word uttered by the Divine Mind calls manifested life to begin once more. Secondly, the material aspect expressing what is in the Divine Mind must be in a process of ever-becoming. In other words, the cosmos consists of body and soul. Man emanated in the image of divinity is similarly dual and his evolutionary goal is a fully conscious return to the Divine Mind.

The Ancients taught in unison that growth is effected through a succession of lives which is a concept that is found in Ancient religious texts after texts and implied in symbolism in much of the Ancient wisdom we find from nation to nation. Herodotus, the Greek historian of the 5th century B.C.E., wrote that *"the Egyptians were the first to teach that the human soul is immortal, and at death the body enters into some other living thing then coming to birth and after passing through all creatures of land, sea, and air (which cycle it completes in three thousand years) it enters once more into a human body, at birth"*. The

theory of reincarnation is often ascribed to Pythagoras, since he spent some time in Egypt studying its philosophy and, according to Herodotus (bk. ii, § 123), *"adopted this opinion as if it were his own."* Dr. Margaret A. Murray, who worked with Professor Flinders Petrie, illustrates the Egyptian belief by referring to the ka-names of three kings (the ka-name relates to the vital essence of an individual); the first two of the twelfth dynasty: that of Amonemhat I means *"He who repeats births,"* Senusert I: *"He whose births live,"* and the ka-name of Setekhy I of the 19th Dynasty was *"Repeater of births"* (The Splendour That Was Egypt, 1949, p. 211).

Reincarnation has been connected with the rites of Osiris, one of the Mysteries or cycles of initiation perpetuated in Egypt. The concept of transformation as recorded in the Egyptian texts has been interpreted in various ways. De Briere expresses it in astronomical terms: "The sensitive soul re-entered by the gate of the gods, or the Capricorn, into the Amenthe, the watery heavens, where it dwelt always with pleasure; until, descending by the gate of men, or the Cancer, it came to animate a new body" (Quoted in Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought, by James Bonwick, 1956 reprint; p. 80). I have this book and it is great and I strongly recommend it to every reader and when you read it then look for the similarities to Christianity; those that Rome did not change that is. This will blow your mind when you see that Christianity, like all religions before it, was to be but another form and reinterpretation of Egyptian religion and instead of an elaboration and further insights into these Divine Truths Rome "changed it beyond belief" to where little if any has roots to Judaism and Egyptian religion and the Divine Truths understood by the Ancients since the beginning of recorded history. Herodotus writes of transmigration, i.e., that the soul passes through various animals before being reborn in human form. Here we see the Greeks agreeing with the Egyptians and other Ancient Spiritual masters in this regard.

This "transmigration" of the Soul refers not to the human Soul quite the way that we might think but to the molecules, atoms, and other components that clothe it. They gravitate to vehicles similar in qualities to their former host's, drawn magnetically to the new milieu by the imprint made by the human soul, whether it be fine or gross. It is quite clear from the Egyptian Book of the Dead and other texts that the soul itself after death undergoes experiences in the Duat (Dwat) or Underworld, the realm and condition between heaven and earth, or beneath the earth, supposedly traversed by the sun from sunset to sunrise. The evolution of consciousness is symbolized by the Solar Barque moving through the Duat. In this context the "hours" of travel represent stages of development. Bika Reed states that at a certain "hour" the individual meets the "Rebel in the Soul," that is, at the "hour of spiritual transformation." And translating from the scroll Reed gives: "the soul warns, only if a man is allowed to continue evolving, can the intellect reach the heart." In the Corpus Hermeticum Thoth -- Tehuti -- was the Mind of the Deity (the Logos), whom the Alexandrian Greeks identified with Hermes. The text states that Thoth, after planning and engineering the cosmos, unites himself with the Demiurgic Mind. There are other expressions proving that this Poimandres text is a Hellenized version of prior Ancient Egyptian doctrine. Again Egyptian religion is digested by nation after nation and that great Greek nation was built upon Egyptian truths. An important concept that we must address is that of "making-new-again." The treatise claims that all animal and vegetable forms contain in themselves *"the seed of again-becoming"* -- a clear reference to reimpodiment -- *"every birth of flesh ensouled . . . shall of necessity renew itself."* G. R. S. Mead interprets this as palingenesis or reincarnation -- "the renewal on the karmic wheel of birth-and-death" (Thrice-Greatest Hermes, 1: 94; 2:55.). These teachings are just a small part of what Rome hated about these Gnostics among other things. This is the secret of our God that you have never known that goes to the very core of our existence. We, as human dualities of Spirit and Soul never die but live again till Souls fulfill their purpose and maturation in this realm of Physical existence; much of which is full of sorrow and pain. Hence the desire to escape the wheel of incarnation and reincarnation as seen by the Ancients whereby we can return home and rest with God our Father.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find these same teachings of reincarnation in the New Testament? Yes we can.

The existence of a secret teaching can actually be found in the New Testament. Let us read some texts.

*Mark 4:11-12 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of*



*God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. (KJV)*

*Matt 13:11-12 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 2:6-8 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (KJV)*

*1 Cor 4:1 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (KJV)*

*Matt 11:25-26 25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. (KJV)*

Paul wrote about teachings which are taught to spiritual "babies," teachings about righteousness for the more mature, and then teachings for the spiritually mature. Paul reveals this fact immediately after equating Melchizedek to Jesus by stating:

*"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Heb. 5:11-14)*

According to received tradition, after the Roman invasion of Jerusalem, the author of the Gospel of Mark established a church in Alexandria, Egypt. Mark may also have been the author of a "secret gospel" containing more advanced teaching for those being initiated into the Christian mysteries. This secret gospel contains passages portraying Jesus teaching secret doctrines. It is these "secret teachings" which Rome would view as a threat to their own agenda and doctrines that they wished to teach and have the masses follow.

[Let us continue our study in the next article in this series.](#)

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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #3

**Answer for yourself:** Did that divine knowledge of God and man's Soul which constituted the supreme possession of the Ancient priestcrafts survive the destruction of their temples? Is it yet accessible to mankind, or does it lie buried beneath the rubbish of ages, entombed within the very sanctuaries that were once illuminated by its splendor?

*"In Egypt," writes Origen, "the philosophers have a sublime and secret knowledge respecting the nature of God."*

**Answer for yourself:** What did Julian imply when he spoke of the secret initiations into the sacred Mysteries of the Seven-Ray God who lifted souls to salvation through His own nature? Who were the blessed theurgists who understood them profundities concerning which Julian dared not speak?

**Answer for yourself:** If this inner religious and secret "Divine Doctrine" of God and the Soul was always concealed from the masses, for whom a simpler code had been devised, is it not highly probable that the proponents of every aspect of modern civilization--philosophic, ethical, religious, and scientific--are ignorant of the true meaning of the very theories and tenets on which their beliefs are founded? Do the arts and sciences that the race has inherited from older nations conceal beneath their fair exterior a mystery so great that only the most illumined intellect can grasp its import? **Such is undoubtedly the case and is easily proven today beyond anyone's doubt if they will but look.**

Albert Pike, who has gathered ample evidence of the excellence of the doctrines promulgated by the Mysteries, supports these above assertions by quoting from the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Plato, Epictetus, Proclus, Aristophanes, and Cicero, all of whom unite in lauding the high ideals of these institutions. From the unqualified testimony of such reputable authorities no reasonable doubt can exist that the initiates of Egypt, Babylon, Greece and other ancient countries possessed the correct solution to those great cultural, intellectual, moral, and social problems which in an unsolved state confront the humanity of the twentieth century. The reader must not interpret this statement to mean that antiquity had foreseen and analyzed every complexity of this generation, but rather that the Mysteries had evolved a method whereby the mind was so trained in the fundamental truths of life that it was able to cope intelligently with any emergency which might arise. Thus the reasoning faculties were organized by a simple process of mental culture, for it was asserted that where reason reigns supreme, inconsistency cannot exist. Wisdom, it was maintained, lifts man to the condition of Godhood, a fact which explains the enigmatical statement that the Mysteries transformed "roaring beasts into divinities."

The preeminence of any philosophical system can be determined only by the excellence of its products. The Mysteries have demonstrated the superiority of their culture by giving to the world minds of such overwhelming greatness, souls of such beatific vision, and lives of such outstanding impeccability that even after the lapse of ages the teachings of these individuals constitute the present spiritual, intellectual, and ethical standards of the race. The initiates of the various Mystery schools of past ages form a veritable golden chain of supermen and superwomen connecting heaven and earth. They are the links of that Homeric "golden chain" with which Zeus



boasted he could bind the several parts of the universe to the pinnacle of Olympus. The sons and daughters of Isis are indeed an illustrious line--founders of sciences and philosophies, patrons of arts and crafts, supporting by the transcendency of their divinely given power the structures of world religions erected to do them homage. Founders of doctrines which have molded the lives of uncounted generations, these Initiate-Teachers bear witness to that spiritual culture which has always existed--and always will exist--as a divine institution in the world of men.

But historically as the orthodox church in Rome gained more and more political power the more it viewed "secret teachings" and "Ancient Wisdom" as a threat to their own public teachings. Yet let us not forget that the New Testament speaks much of these "secret teachings" of the Jewish Christ and Paul:

*"He [Jesus] told them, ' The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'" (Mark 4:11-12)*

*"No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." (1 Corinthians 2:7)*

*"So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God." (1 Corinthians 4:1)*

*"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." (Colossians 1:9)*

The Church leader who made the final and greatest attempt to revive the secret teachings of "the Christ" within the orthodox teachings was the first Church Father named Origen (183-253 A.D.) of Alexandria in Egypt who was a disciple of Clement of Alexandria, Egypt. I want you to notice that in the beginning the Christian Church has strong connections with Egypt because it is from Egypt that the world will get its religions no matter how far today the apple has fallen from the tree. Origen was the first person since Paul to develop a system of theology around the teachings of "the Jewish Christ". His effort was the first within the orthodox church to systematize a theology on so vast a scale. Although Origen defended orthodoxy, he included in his system the wisdom of the Christian Gnostics. His theology was a perfect synthesis of "orthodox" and "gnostic" teachings and came the closest to reviving the "Lost Christianity" of the original sects, communities and schools, at a time when the Christian Gnosticism was falling into disrepute. Unfortunately, hundreds of years later, the Church declared him a heretic and his teachings as heresy mostly because they affirmed preexistence of the Soul and therefore reincarnation.

Origen had this to say about the secret teachings of Jesus:

*"[Jesus] conversed with His disciples in private, and especially in their sacred retreats, concerning the Gospel of God; but the words which He uttered have not been preserved, because it appeared to the evangelists that they could not be adequately conveyed to the multitude in writing or in speech... and they saw... what things were to be committed to writing, and how this was to be done, and what was by no means to be written to the multitude, and what was to be expressed in words, and what was not to be so conveyed". (Contra Celsus, Chap. VI. 18)*

Concerning these secret teachings, Clement stated:

*"James the Righteous, John and Peter were entrusted by the Lord after his resurrection with the higher knowledge. They imparted it to the other apostles, to the seventy..." (Outlines Book VI)*

A fragment of the Secret Gospel of Mark, one of the Gnostic texts discovered, describes this Jewish Christ named "Jesus" performing secret initiation rites. Before the discovery of Gnostic writings, our only knowledge of it came from a letter written by Church Father Clement of Alexandria (150 AD - 211 AD), which quotes this secret gospel and refers to it as *"a more spiritual gospel for the use of those who were being perfected."* He said, *"It even yet is most carefully guarded [by the church at Alexandria], being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries."* Clement insists elsewhere that the Jewish Christ among the religion of Judaism revealed a secret teaching to those who were "capable of receiving it and being molded by it." The same could be said for the operation of the "Egyptian Christ" and the "Greek Christ" and all others emanations from God sent to teach mankind the truth about their Spiritual identities and the life that they were given in this physical realm and existence. Clement indicates that he possessed "the secret tradition", which was handed down through the Jewish apostles and followers of "the Jewish Christ/Messiah" that taught the nation of Jews through Judaism and its tenants. Such Jewish Gnostics, and even Gentile Gnostics, were spiritual critics of the orthodox Church of what they saw as not so much a popularization as a vulgarization of the real Christianity as originally imparted to mankind. This original teachings of "the Christ" among mankind is the real Christianity no matter what nation you find it or what term it is called. There is only one Divine Truth and teaching of God's Christ among men and this truth overlaps from nation to nation and is easily detected and recognized once the student and reader possesses the necessary "keys" needed to recognize the Ancient Wisdom given mankind since the beginning of recorded history. The orthodox church stressed faith, while the Gnostic church stressed a secret knowledge (gnosis).

**Answer for yourself:** And what is at the core of this "secret knowledge"? Namely that the "Jesus Story" is not a "literal-historical" story confined to but one person but an allegory and metaphor for the Soul in all of mankind and its intended incarnation and subsequent spiritual growth in this physical realm leading up to is release from the body at death where it is reunited with God. This secret knowledge emphasized "spiritual resurrection" of the Divine Nature in mankind rather than physical resurrection of the physical body at one's death. Instead of a physical resurrection of the dead body these Ancient Gnostics taught the re-incarnation of the Soul in a new body. Indeed, the Gnostic Christians believed reincarnation to be the true interpretation of "resurrection" for those who have not attained a spiritual resurrection through this secret knowledge in their previous earthly life.

The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus states that the Pharisees, the founders of rabbinic Judaism for whom Paul once belonged, believed in reincarnation. He writes that the Pharisees believed that the souls of bad men are punished after death but that the souls of good men are *"removed into other bodies"* and they will *"have power to revive and live again."* The Sadducees, the other prominent Jewish sect in Palestine, did not emphasize life after death and according to the Bible *"say there is no resurrection"* (Matthew 22:23). From what we have just discussed, it is clear that what Matthew really states is that the Sadducees "say there is no reincarnation". Let that sink in for a second.

The following are some the secret teachings of Jesus from the Gnostic gospels that affirm reincarnation, revealing the secret knowledge:

*"Watch and pray that you may not be born in the flesh, but that you may leave the bitter bondage of this life." (Book of Thomas the Contender)*

In the Book of Thomas the Contender, Jesus tells the disciple Thomas that after death those who were once believers but have remained attached to things of "transitory beauty" will be consumed "in their concern about life" and will be "brought back to the visible realm".

In the Secret Book of John, reincarnation is placed at the heart of its discussion of the salvation of souls. The book was written by 185 AD at the latest. Here is the Secret Book of John's perspective on reincarnation:

All people have drunk the water of forgetfulness and exist in a state of ignorance. Some are able to overcome ignorance through the Spirit of life that descends upon them. These souls "will be saved and will become



perfect," that is, escape the round of rebirth into a world full of suffering and sorrow. John asks Jesus what will happen to those who do not attain salvation. They are hurled down "into forgetfulness" and thrown into "prison", the Gnostic code word for a "new body". The only way for these souls to escape, says Jesus, is to emerge from forgetfulness and acquire knowledge (their true identity and live accordingly in obedience to the Torah, the roadmap for their Souls). A soul in this situation can do so by finding a teacher or savior who has the strength to lead her home. "This soul needs to follow another soul in whom the Spirit of life dwells, because she is saved through the Spirit. Then she will never be thrust into flesh again" (Secret Book of John).

According to Pistis Sophia, some souls do experience hell as a shadowy place of torture where they go after death. But after passing through this hell, the souls return for further experiences on earth. Only a few extremely wicked souls are not allowed to reincarnate. These are cast into "outer darkness" until the time when they are destined to be "destroyed and dissolved".

Several Gnostic texts combine the ideas of reincarnation and union with God. The Apocalypse of Paul, a second-century text, describes the Merkabah-style ascent of the apostle Paul as well as the reincarnation of a soul who was not ready for such an ascent. It shows how both reincarnation and ascents fit into Gnostic theology.

Pistis Sophia combines the ideas of reincarnation and divine union in a passage that begins with the question: What happens to "a man who has committed no sin, but done good persistently, but has not found the mysteries?" The Pistis Sophia tells us that the soul of the good man who has not found the mysteries will receive "a cup filled with thoughts and wisdom." This will allow the soul to remember its divine origin and so to pursue the "mysteries of the Light" until it finds them and is able to "inherit the Light forever." To "inherit the Light forever" is a Gnostic code for union with God.

For the Gnostic Christians, **resurrection was also a spiritual event - simply the awakening of the soul**. They believed that people who experience the resurrection can experience eternal life, or union with God, while on earth and then after death, escape rebirth. People who don't experience the resurrection and union with God on earth will reincarnate. Jesus states the following the Gnostic Gospels:

"People who say they will first die and then arise are mistaken. If they do not first receive resurrection while they are alive, once they have died they will receive nothing" (Gospel of Philip).

**Answer for yourself:** The Gnostics claimed their terminology was sprinkled through the Epistles of Paul, himself a Gnostic. The people who wrote and circulated gospels like the Gospel of Thomas certainly didn't think they were heretics as they would be labeled by Rome later. They thought of themselves as the true followers of "the Christ" or "Chrestians" (Christians) who had received, in addition to the other gospels, secret teaching. For example in the 4th chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Mark says that Jesus taught certain things privately to the disciples. And Paul too says that he had secret teaching. And these claim to give some of the secret teaching of the Christ (Jesus). Whether he actually did teach secretly or not, we don't know otherwise. But the Gospel of Thomas claims to be this kind of secret teaching.

For example, the author of Ephesians whom many believe to be Paul or a Pauline follower uses the words "awake", "sleep" and "dead" in a Gnostic sense: Do these remarks above help us better to understand verses like these:

*Eph 5:14-17 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (KJV)*

*Col 1:27-28 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every*

*man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may (KJV)*

Now we need to pay close attention. Many of the Greek words in the New Testament translated as "resurrection" also mean to "rise" or "awake". Therefore, argued the Gnostics, when Paul says people can be part of the resurrection, he is really saying that their souls can be awakened to the Spirit of God within them (awakened to the indwelling of 'the Christ') and by so doing come to know their "true identity, from where they have come, and to where they go when they die". Thus, the Gnostic Christian's motto was *"Know Thyself"* which referred to knowing the Divine Nature within them, their very Soul.

Paul writes in several places that resurrection involves a spirit body. Such a definition corresponds with spiritual resurrection and reincarnation and not a bodily resurrection.

*"It [the dead body] is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:44)*

*"I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." (1 Corinthians 15:50)*

*"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ." (Colossians 2:13)*

But even more startling we know that in some passages Paul writes about the resurrection as a present rather than a future event:

*"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:3-11).*

Colossians also seems to describe the resurrection as a "present-day event":

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." (Colossians 3:1)*

*"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." (Colossians 3:9-10)*

In the above passage, taking off the old self and putting on the new is a code for the resurrection, which, again, is described as a present-life event.

The Gnostic manuscripts present a clear, simple and strong vision of the resurrection. First, the Gospel of Thomas disabuses people of the notion that the resurrection is a future event:

*"His followers said to him, 'When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?' He said to them, 'What you look for has come, but you do not know it.'" (Gospel of Thomas)*



In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus is saying that the resurrection and the kingdom are already here. We simply do not realize it - or, in the Gnostic sense, we simply have not integrated with them.

The Jewish Christ teaching these truths through Judaism to Israel explained the concept of resurrection before raising Lazarus from the dead:

*"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:23-26)*

In these verses, Jesus tells Martha her brother Lazarus will "rise again". Martha mistakenly thinks Jesus means Lazarus will come out of his grave at Judgment Day. Jesus corrects her by stating that those who believe in Him will live, even before they die. **Jesus is referring here to spiritual regeneration.** Jesus also states that those who die believing in Him, will never die. **This clearly implies reincarnation.** The flip-side to this is that those who die not believing in Him, will have to die again (i.e. reincarnate). It is interesting to note that by raising Lazarus from death, Jesus is forcing Lazarus to live out the rest of his life only to die physically again. By raising Lazarus from death, Jesus seems to be demonstrating that one does not wait until Judgment Day to rise.

Jesus flatly tells Nicodemus:

*"I tell you a truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3)*

Nicodemus misunderstands what Jesus means by "born again":

*"How can a person be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" (John 3:4)*

In response, Jesus states:

*"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." (John 3:5-6)*

In context of these verses, Jesus or "the teachings of the Christ" is talking about the process of resurrection, that is, being born of water and being born of the Spirit. Jesus describes physical resurrection (to be born of water) and spiritual resurrection (to be born of the Spirit). They are two similar yet different processes. From these verses, the case can be made that Jesus taught the concept of resurrection as being physical rebirth as well as spiritual rebirth. In the Apocryphal book Wisdom of Solomon, recognized by the Catholic Church, is the following verse:

*"... I was given a sound body to live in because I was already good." (Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20)*

**Answer for yourself:** Already good? That makes you think does it not? Does not the above verse raise the following question: How is it possible to get a body after you have already been good if reincarnation is not a fact?

Flavius Josephus records that the Essenes of the Dead Sea Scrolls lived "the same kind of life" as the followers of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras who taught reincarnation. According to Josephus, the Essenes believed that the soul is both immortal and preexistent which is necessary for belief in reincarnation.

The Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the Jewish mystical tradition of union with God went back to the first, if not

the third, century before Christ was depicted as the embodiment of "Jesus". Jewish mysticism has its roots in Greek mysticism which espoused reincarnation and this is important to note. Some of the hymns found with the Dead Sea Scrolls are similar to the Hekhalot hymns sung by the Jewish mystics. One text gives us unmistakable evidence of Jewish mysticism. It is called "Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice". Also, fragments of 1 Enoch, which is considered the oldest evidence of Jewish mysticism, were also found with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Since Jewish mysticism existed in the third century before the Jewish Christ was depicted as Jesus, as Enoch indicates, then it would certainly have been present in first-century Judaism.

**Answer for yourself:** So what does all of this evidence show us when amassed? **As stated earlier, this twin idea of divine union and reincarnation can be found in early Christianity and one can easily conclude that it was the key to the heart of Jesus' message in many places in the New Testament.**

Reincarnation has been a tenet for thousands of years for certain Jews and Christians. The Zohar is a work of great weight and authority among the Jews. In II, 199 b, it says that *"all souls are subject to revolutions."* This is metempsychosis or a'leen b'gilgoola which is the belief that at death the soul passes into another human but it declares that "men do not know the way they have been judged in all time." That is, in their "revolutions" **they lose a complete memory of the acts that have led to judgment.** The Kether Malkuth says, "If she, the soul, be pure, then she shall obtain favor. . . but if she hath been defiled, then she shall wander for a time in pain and despair. . . until the days of her purification." If the soul be pure and if she comes at once from God at birth, how could she be defiled? And where is she to wander if not on this or some other world until the days of her purification? The Rabbis always explained it as meaning she wandered down from Paradise through many revolutions or births until purity was regained.

Under the name of "Din Gilgol Neshomes" the doctrine of reincarnation is constantly spoken of in the Talmud. The term means *"the judgment of the revolutions of the souls."* And Rabbi Manassa, son of Israel, one of the most revered, says in his book Nishmath Hayem: "The belief or the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is a firm and infallible dogma accepted by the whole assemblage of our church with one accord, so that there is none to be found who would dare to deny it. . . . Indeed, there is a great number of sages in Israel who hold firm to this doctrine so that they made it a dogma, a fundamental point of our religion. We are therefore in duty bound to obey and to accept this dogma with acclamation . . . as the truth of it has been incontestably demonstrated by the Zohar, and all books of the Kabbalists."

**Answer for yourself:** Having seen this evidence does it not make you wonder what we would have been taught about God and the Divine Realm had not Rome destroyed the libraries of the known world to cover up their "man-made" replacement religion known as Orthodox Christianity today?

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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #4

We made mention in earlier articles that Gnosticism is based on Gnosis, the knowledge of transcendence arrived at by way of interior, intuitive means.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it possible by studying Gnosticism that we can learn valuable truths and lessons concerning the Soul within mankind?

I believe we can and all of this is related in the final analysis to "the Christ" of God and the purpose for "this Christ" within the flesh of mankind and the true "revealer" of God to mankind. It is up to man to "find the Christ within" and through communion with Him partake of God and in so doing discern his true "makeup" as a Divine Creature within this physical plane of existence and the purpose for such an existence. This is made all the more important by coming to an understanding of man and the Soul within him and Gnosticism gives us plenty of insight into this miracle. The goal is for man to awaken to his true Spiritual Identity as a Divine Being and act accordingly and this is accomplished by finding the "Christ within" and receiving instruction and enlightenment from Him.

**Answer for yourself:** How did these Ancient Gnostics from Egypt down through history teach these truths? They taught these metaphysical realities through the agency of "myths". Let me explain a little.

Although Gnosticism thus rests on personal religious experience, it is a mistake to assume all such experience results in Gnostic recognitions. It is nearer the truth to say that Gnosticism expresses a specific religious experience, an experience that does not lend itself to the language of theology or philosophy, but which is instead closely affinitized to, and expresses itself through the medium of **myth**. Indeed, one finds that most Gnostic scriptures take the forms of myths; myths that are not to be understood as if "historical-literal" events in the "here and now" but yet expressions of "literal-truths" told via the agency of metaphors and allegory which lay beyond the physical realm in which we live. We see but a "shadow" of these truths in our visible and physical existences but the "real" exists beyond this physical realm in which we live in the invisible realm which we call "the Spirit" or "Energy" from which we have come and to which we return after our existence in this Earth.

**Answer for yourself:** What should we know about the use of "myths" and religion and Divine Truths imparted to the Ancients since the beginning of recorded time?

**The term "myth" should not here be taken to mean "stories that are not true", but rather, that the truths embodied in these myths are of a different order from the dogmas of theology or the statements of philosophy.**

Our whole problem that lays at the very heart of Christianity and Christian doctrine as we have been taught it today is that when Rome comes around it "literalized" and "historized" and "carnalized" these Divine Truths handed down in the form of "myths" for thousands of years previously by the Spiritual Ancients and in so

doing we lost the "real" truths as understood and taught by these Ancient Spiritual masters and have settled for a false "historical-literal" interpretation instead that obscures that this Divine Existence is not limited to but one person, this Jesus, but rather encompasses all of God's children. First before we begin a little history is needed.

The early Christian Church, before it was an organized body, emerged in an historical era known for its syncretism, variety, and religious experimentalism. Faced with an outbreak of interpretive zealots and apocalyptic mystics, the network of societies calling themselves **"Followers of the Way of Christ" (later to be renamed "Christians")** was steeped in confusion during the first three centuries of its existence. Without a distinctive, unifying body of dogma, this network would have no chance at survival; but first, the leaders of this emerging "authoritative" body had to draw distinctions between what they defined as their "orthodox Christianity" and other "heretical sectarians" (in their opinion) that sprouted up in major theological centers like Alexandria, Egypt and Rome. One of the most significant, if not the most significant sectarian movements and challenges to the later Roman Christian concept of faith during these centuries was the philosophical movement that modern scholars know as Gnosticism, which presented not merely a dogmatic challenge to the Church, but an entirely alien knowledge of the Divine that opposed the confined "literalized" interpretations of the Divine as taught by the emerging Gentile Church of Rome and applied to their concept of "the Christ" called Jesus. We must remember that Rome had "literal" gods and "literal godmen" setting on their thrones known as "Ceasars". To "literalize" these Ancient Divine metaphysical truths and apply them to real people and presumed "literal people" was no problem for them for they already had done this with their Emperors and Ceasars. And know that Rome, even knowing that the standard hermeneutic of these prior Divine Wisdoms and Spiritual Truths of these Ancients as handed down since the beginning of recorded time had never been understood by these Ancients as "historical-literal" in the first place, was no obstacle to Rome **"reinterpreting" everything in their "literalized-historical" approach to "the Christ"**. These Divine Truths of these Ancient Spiritual Master since Egypt on down were "real" and "literal" as taught in these religious "myths" expressing the metaphysical but the personified characters embodying these Divine Spiritual Realities were not to be understood as "historical" or literal-real people. They were pictures and allegories expressing the whole of mankind. Rome will change all of that with their "literal-historical" Jesus as "the Christ" and confine such a Divine Concept to only "one person" and exclude the rest of mankind in the process. This is the tragic horror of what they did; they caused the whole of mankind under the Roman Church's influence to loose their true knowledge of their Divine Beingness and it remains so today in traditional Western Christianity.

A great body of sects that arose in Egypt and Asia Minor between the First and Fourth centuries had qualities that we call "gnostic"; these sects, however, never used this term to describe themselves. Mostly they called themselves, believe it or not, "followers of the Christ" ("Christians") ; making no distinction between themselves and the early Church. These "Gnostics" considered themselves "followers of the Christ and His teachings" as handed down since the beginning of mankind in every nation; thus the name "Christians". Originally they were "Chrestians" for the Gnostic term for the "indwelling Christ" was "Chrestus". But again Rome will change all of that when they over the first 5 centuries worked furiously to eradicate all traces of Gnosticism and did so by burning countless numbers of the world's libraries to cover up their agenda. Consequently, since many different sects that considered themselves "followers of the Christ" were grouped under the heading of "Christians" then modern scholars today are forced to lump these "Gnostics" all together based on their possession of similar knowledge, its presuppositions and foundations and their metaphysics or even how they dealt with the nature of man's being (both spiritual and physical - duality). To elaborate on the beliefs of every sect would require a many-volumed opus; as such, scholars of gnosticism have deduced two main points that most Gnostic groups shared:

- **a pseudo-dualistic cosmology of spirit versus matter, including Emanationism from the One, the Father who "emits all things"**
- **the belief in "gnosis," or personal acquaintance with the God of the Spiritual realms.**

**Answer for yourself:** What is "Emanationism"? This is important for us for one of these emanations is "the Christ".

Emanationism is a component in the astrophysics that studies the origin and evolution and structure of the



universe and concerns itself with the cosmology of certain religious or philosophical systems that argue a Supreme Being did not directly create the physical universe, but instead emanated lower spiritual beings who created the world (ie., intermediaries, aeons, angels, etc.). We accept this concept of "angels" in Christianity as other Divine Beings but we don't call it the same as did the Ancients and have lost all concepts of Emanationism as taught by these Ancient Spiritual Masters. In fact in many circles we believe in "angels" but refuse the teaching of Emanationism. Emanationism explains creation as a gradual process of emanation and descent from a transcendental Absolute to a mundane physical reality. Try to think of Jacob's ladder where he saw Diving Begins "ascending and descending" from Heaven to Earth. This is a great picture explaining this concept which we find in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jacob's ladders, named for the biblical Jacob who saw a ladder leading from earth to heaven in a vision, have shown up all over the world. Like the spinning top, the Jacob's ladder seems to be universal symbol, appearing at widely divergent world locations with no apparent historical connectedness. This is easily explained when you study Gnosticism for these Divine Truths of the Absolute and His emanation from Himself thus connecting the Invisible with the Visible realm in which man inhabits was known by all at one time on this planet.

Many Gnostics (especially the followers of Valentinius) taught that there was the One, the original, unknowable God; and then from the One emanated Aeons, pairs of lesser beings in sequence. The Aeons together made up the Pleroma, or fullness, of God. **The lowest of these pairs were Sophia ("Wisdom," in Greek) and Christ.**

Understanding this "ladder of Jacob" then there is no Creator God standing apart from, even if intimately connected with, the universe as in typical Christian monotheism; but rather a series of stages of down-grading of Consciousness-Being, by means of which the Absolute principle actually becomes the multiplicity of entities and objects (the All in the One). This is why at the center of Egyptian religion and even Judaism from which it came we find these same pure concepts not adulterated as we do in later Christianity. The Ancients of all nations once understood that God is everything and everything is God; that the world is either identical with God or in some way a self-expression of His nature. Similarly, it is the view that everything that exists constitutes a "unity" and this all-inclusive unity is in some sense Divine. These Ancient Spiritual Master of Egypt and other nations understood that every existing entity is, only one Being; and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it. All matter, energy, and life are an interconnected unity of which we are an inseparable part. These Ancient Spiritual Masters from nation to nation taught that there is a single kind of substance, energy/matter, which is vibrant and infinitely creative in all its forms, both invisible and visible. This body and mind are indivisibly united. Finally let it be said that these taught that every individual has direct access through perception, emotion and meditation to this ultimate reality, which is the Universe and Nature with all its Energies, Powers, and Forces interworking together whom we call God and this "whole" exists on a small scale in every human being as man is a microcosm of the Cosmos and Universe which in the final analysis is the totality of his being, past, present and future. This God and His Universe as His expression is self-organizing, ever-evolving and inexhaustibly diverse and man is an interconnected unity with this Universe of which we as mankind are an inseparable part. This understanding of God and His workings allowed these Ancients to revere and celebrate the Universe as the totality of God; His being, past, present and future. This Universe and God was understood as self-organizing, ever-evolving and God is thus inexhaustibly diverse. His overwhelming power, beauty and fundamental mystery compel the deepest human reverence and wonder and we can read of these insights today when we study and properly understand the Ancient Religions of mankind like we find in Egypt and as Gnosticism cherished and preserved for the whole of mankind in their writings which Rome tried desperately to utterly destroy. Thus these Gnostic Spiritual Masters understood that man is an integral part of Nature, thus man should cherish Nature as the workings of this God and revere and preserve all manifestations of "life" in all its magnificent beauty and diversity. Thus they strove to live in harmony with Nature locally and globally and in so doing acknowledged the inherent value of all life, human and non-human, and strive to treat all living beings with compassion and respect for at their core they are all expressions of this Divine Energy we call God. Likewise all humans are equal centers of awareness of the Universe and nature, and all deserve a life of equal dignity and mutual respect. **This in a nutshell is the Gnostic Mystery of God in all things.**

***Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created***

*by him, and for him: (KJV)*

And the communicator of these Divine Truths and these "all things" mentioned above is "the indwelling Christ" who brings down to man these Divine Truths from Heaven above. Thus Egypt says it best and yet does so still today: **"So Above, So Below"**. This is the cosmology that produced the worlds greatest cultures that have ever existed and which allowed Ancient man to reach such pinnacles of truth and knowledge that we set as dwarfs today with all our science and technology and but wonder at their insights and achievements. A blessing to us today is what archeologist consistently dig up and provide us which we can read that reveals these unbelievable Divine Truths hidden from us for thousands of years. Archeology is restoring these Ancient Spiritual Truths today to those who desire to know them and when you encounter them as I and others have they absolutely take your breath away; sadly few hear of these truths since Christianity turns a deaf ear to all but its rigid religious doctrines.

It has been suggested by Professor Huston Smith, in his book Forgotten Truth that the basic cosmology, and this Emanationism arrived at independently by many different philosophies and spiritual traditions by nation after nation down through recorded history, shows Reality to be divided into a very minimum of four levels or planes of reality:

- the Infinite or Absolute
- the Celestial or Divine,
- the Intermediate or Psychic
- and the Terrestrial or Physical

Each of these can in turn be sub-divided. Thus, applying this in an Emanationist perspective, the process of creation, in the Emanationist cosmogony and cosmology, proceeds through a number of distinct stages. First the Absolute produces the Spiritual reality (or "God"). The Spiritual reality in turn produces the Psychic reality. And finally, the Psychic reality produces the Physical reality; the material world. Each reality constitutes a specific stage of manifestation interconnected to the one above and the one below. Emanationism understands the more subtle and spiritual realities as preceding and generating the grosser and more material ones, sort of like a "ladder" as mentioned before and as seen in the Kabbalah and not vice-versa as materialism assumes; and that additionally those grosser realities are the result of an out-flowing from the subtle, rather than being created ex nihilo - out of nothing - as the Theistic religions claim. There is a "First-Cause" for all that comes after and is the Source for "all" that later exists; both invisible and visible.

We only need to go to Egypt to see this best expressed even yet today. The most common knowledge about Ancient Egyptian divinities comes to us as the result of the "interpretation" of western academic Egyptologists of the Ancient Egyptian texts. Sadly I have found as have other objective scholars that this Western Christian mindset of these Egyptologists and their "interpretations" are skewed and constrained by their western and Judaeo-Christian paradigms. As a result, they report a confused religious system with a great many number of "so-called gods". Academic Egyptologists, while worshipping everything Greek or Roman, totally ignore eyewitness accounts of Herodotus, Plutarch, Plato, Diodorus, and other historians who reported about the Ancient Egyptian traditions, and who were much closer to the scene than the further removed Western "Christianized" academic Egyptologists. In line with Gnostic thoughts of the Divine down through history Egypt taught what we explained above; namely that there exists "neter" and "netert" but these are not defined as "gods" and "goddesses" as unenlightened Western Egyptologists erroneously do. Instead of calling Egyptian religion "polytheistic" and "heathen" as do these Christian Egyptologists today we find upon objective study that rather Egypt understood this Divine Absolute correctly and explained this Absolute as "neteru" (plural of "neter/netert") and explained these "neter" as Divine Principles, Energies, and Functions of the One Supreme God. Call them "attributes" of the One if you wish. Egypt taught that there is One God who is self-produced, self-existent, immortal, invisible, eternal, omniscient, almighty, etc. This One God was represented through the many functions and attributes of "His" domain. These many attributes of this One God were called collectively the "neteru". The terms "gods" and "goddesses" as given by many Christian Egyptologists today as separate divinities from this One God are a gross misrepresentation of the Egyptian term "neteru". **Egypt defined this God through His emanations which are these "neteru"**. The more we learn of these qualities or "neteru"



the closer we are getting to know our own Divine origin as mankind. Far from being a primitive, polytheistic form or religion as erroneously seen by Christianity, this is, when properly understood, the highest form of monotheism that ever has existed among mankind even yet today. The logical and only way to explain anything to human beings is on human terms and in human forms. As such, the complicated scientific and philosophical information was reduced in Ancient Egypt to human and animal images and terms which were but pictures and symbols of the "inexpressible". These "neteru", like Horus with a hawk's head, are but "symbols" and "metaphors" expressing a concept behind the image given or idea given to this indescribable God. This was again best done through the agency of **"myths"** and other nations which followed Egypt did the same. Thus all of these "godmen" and their "stories" are at their core metaphysical stories of the Descent of the Soul through different levels and stages of Emanation until it finds its home in the flesh of mankind.

Not knowing this then when we first read of these myths of Osiris, Isis, Horus, and Set we are startled by their similarities with our "Jesus Story" and discount them outright either out of fear or want to blame the Devil for "copying" the "Jesus Story" as did the Church Fathers when these similarities were brought out to them by their critics. **Christianity essentially plagiarized Ancient Egyptian religion, and some elements of other religions too. The Church fathers of the 3rd-4th Century AD practically appropriated the myths and legends of other religions as their own, and took them away from the realm of myth and back-wrote them and thus made them "literal" History.** This is the problem that lies at the very core of our "Jesus 'only' Story".

Such is the veracity of the Gnostic Spiritual Truths which lay behind these "godmen" like Osiris, Horus, and Jesus; Gnostic metaphysical Spiritual and Scientific Truths which Rome desired we never know or learn. But again at their core these myths were never intended to be seen and believed as if they were "historical-literal" accounts of real people who lived in the past but only symbols and metaphors and allegories that taught at its core the Divine Soul in its incarnation in this physical realm.

Important for us one again is to note that this "mediation" occurs between these different levels of creation and being and "descent" from the Absolute One. The one we are most concerned with in these articles is "the Logos" or "Christ". Although not all of the gnostic sects were Christian, the most significant did follow the teachings of "the Christs" of Ancient nations to some extent, and it is these that we must investigate when we attempt to show the gnostic concept of "faith," which is inextricably intertwined with both their phenomenon of gnosis and their cosmology. But of concern for us is not just the concept of "Emanationism" but "Dualism" which lies at the very core of this Absolute we call God. We move to this study in the next article in this series.

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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #5

It never ceased to amaze me when taking Church History in Seminary and doing my "outside" reading the shock and horror that I felt when reading about the glorious history of the Christian church down through history. Let me give you an example.

In 1209 A.D. the entire population of the Albigenes was slaughtered at the order of Pope Innocent III. The Albigenes, in the south of France, was then the most populous, the most technically, socially, and economically advanced part of Europe. Its population was largely Gnostics and Arian Christians, and were a sanctuary for Jews who were persecuted almost everywhere else in Europe. All of these groups had a high percentage of literacy and read the Bible, which was prohibited by the Vatican. Innocent III was seeking to put a stop to the "Gnostic heresy", but found it to be entrenched throughout Europe, so he followed the "Cathar Crusade" with the creation of the Inquisition, resulting in countless millions of people being slowly and brutally tortured to death over the next 500 years for even the mere suspicion of being witches. Innocent also reinstated a prohibition against the owning or reading of Bibles by anyone other than clergy, under penalty of death.

Of course we have mentioned before the terrible persecution of the Gnostic Christians by Orthodox Roman Christianity but we never pointed out that Rome is responsible for the death of 18,000,000 people who were put to death for the "beliefs"; beliefs many of which held which were the Ancient Beliefs of the Spiritual Masters of Antiquity which had been handed down since the beginning of recorded time. These "beliefs" could easily be classified as "Gnostic". Gnosticism usually refers to an esoteric cult of divine knowledge (in reality a synthesis of Christianity, Judaism, Greek philosophy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Egyptian religion and the mystery cults of the Mediterranean which flourished during the 2nd and 3rd centuries and which was a rival to, and influence on, early Christianity before the rise of Romanism. The medieval French Cathar heresy and the modern Mandaean sect (in southern Iraq) descend from Gnosticism and likewise felt the point of the Roman sword for their religious traditions concerning "the Christ".

As mentioned elsewhere Gnostic 4th-century codices were discovered in Egypt in the 1940s and they include the Gospel of St Thomas (unconnected with the disciple) and the Gospel of Mary which probably originated about AD 135. Gnosticism envisaged the world as a series of Emanations from the highest of several gods or Aeons. In this cosmology the majority of Gnostics saw as stated before that all creation emanated from One Absolute Intelligent Energy-Force-Power-Spirit and that from this One Source came all later attributes or emanations from this One which comprise the "All in the One". The lowest emanation was seen as less "pure" than this Absolute and associated with the idea of "evil" and this "evil god" (the Demiurge) was believed to have created the material world with all its death and suffering as a prison for the divine sparks that dwell in our human bodies. In other words this Demiurge was "way down the ladder" from the Perfect Absolute. The Gnostics identified this evil creator with the God of the Old Testament.

**Answer for yourself:** Why would they do that? Well this question is self-explanatory if you have ever read the Old Testament and can remember what you read. The God of the Jews is depicted as quite arbitrary and cruel at times. This evil god of this world (who is identified with the god of the Old Testament) is separate from a



higher more abstract God revealed by the "Christ" who taught a religion that regards this world as the creation of a series of evil archons/powers who wish to keep the human soul trapped in an evil physical body, a religion that preaches a hidden wisdom or knowledge only to a select group as necessary for salvation or escape from this world.

These Gnostics taught that this physical world was created by this Evil God who they identified as the Old Testament God who acted without proper authorization from the Good Absolute God, who was the secret and true God. The material world, for either the reason above or some other reason, is therefore inherently evil and flawed. Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden by the Evil God for the "sin" of seeking knowledge (gnosis, get it?), thereby rendering the serpent into a heroic figure. Only later is the serpent made evil in the religion of Rome. No wonder the serpent is identified with "wisdom" all the way down through history. This Evil God is a male figure, sometimes referred to as Samael, which means "blind God," or Yaldabaoth, which means "born of chaos" or some such thing. The Good God was often depicted as a mother goddess named Sophia, which means "wisdom." One only has to read Proverbs to see the beauty of the "feminine" aspect of this Absolute God or "Sophia" as one of His Emanations. Jesus, or "the Christ" functioned as an intermediary and an emissary of the Good God (or Goddess), who was sent to Earth to impart secret knowledge to the chosen few. Now you can begin to see more clearly why the Gnostics saw that the ministry of "the Christ" within mankind was so important for he had come to attempt to liberate humanity from the dominion of this Evil God and this again was done by imparting Divine Truth and Secret Wisdom (Sophia) of the Divine Realm to those who had shown themselves worthy of such truths.

Naturally, the Roman church decided the best way to resolve their differences with these Gnostics was to kill all the Gnostics and burn all their books. This took a while, but they did a really thorough job. With the extermination of the Cathars and the Knights Templar by the Inquisition in the 13th century, the last vestiges of Gnosticism were eradicated... or so it seemed.

Rome would set out to "edit" the Bible because there were traces of gnosticism scattered through the Christian bible (specifically the Gospel and letters attributed to the apostle John, as well as the Book of Revelation). But the real survivals of the religion came in three distinct branches.

- Gnosticism continued to survive in the Mandaeans, a ascetic sect of between 30,000 and 60,000, located along the border between Iran and Iraq. The Mandaeans believe there is a world of light to the North and darkness to the South, and the two are engaged in war (dualism again). Other than that, they seem to follow generally Gnostic lines, although they hold some secrets to themselves.
- The second survival of Gnosticism came through secret societies, which purport to carry on Gnostic traditions through various means. Freemasonry is thought to be influenced by the Gnostics, as were the Knights Templar, who were based in the same French territory where the Cathars lived. Various groups claim the Knights Templar as part of their lineage, including the Illuminati and the Ordo Templi Orientis. The latter organization overtly identifies itself with Gnosticism, and one of its major rituals is the Gnostic Mass, written by Aleister Crowley.
- The third survival of Gnosticism is a weird historical oddity mentioned before. In 1945, a collection of ancient texts were found at the site of Nag Hammadi, Egypt. They had been sealed in jars and buried by an small sect which had a monastery on the site, then forgotten. Because they had been so thoroughly concealed, they escaped the vast book-burning campaign of the early Catholic church. The discovery of the texts provided the first legitimate record of the Gnostics; previously most historical information about Gnosticism was extracted from published church tracts attacking their beliefs.

**Answer for yourself:** So why is all of this so important for Christianity? The Gnostic scriptures provided a lot of insight into the development of early Christianity, as well as providing textual clues to the origins of the New Testament gospels, which may have been plagiarized in part from the Gnostic originals.

Because of this "plagiarism" and "the rewriting" of the Gnostic Gospels which taught only an "indwelling Christ" and not a "literal-historical Christ" as a man who lived in Israel in the first century Rome felt compelled to silence their opponents. Thus the persecution and killing of the Gnostics and the destruction of

their "knowledge" and "gnosis" was undertaken by the emerging Roman Church. Grace is a word which has so oftentimes been mentioned by the lips of Bible-thumping Christians in these earliest centuries but the Gnostics found none at the hands of Rome.

Now I want you to think with me. There has been so much emphasis on grace that most Christians have comparatively little knowledge and understanding of the Law as in the Old Testament. In fact I showed in an earlier article done years ago that the Hebrew word for "grace" carries with it the idea of "conditionalism"; that man "merits grace" from God or else he does not. And this "conditional grace" come only in man's attempt to live according to God's Torah and Commandments and Laws and when and if man fails then repentance and renewal to the task of obedience brings the "grace from God" to such a man. This is a startling revelation to the Christian Church who prides themselves today to not be "under the Law or Laws of God" and not "under grace" and who seldom ever hears of "repentance" except in a new members's class when you join the church. The fact the Church and Protestants in particular won't really follow anything in the Old Testament or even the teachings of "the Christ" himself in Matthew, Mark, and Luke has always puzzled me. We always seem to spend our time in Church reading "the black" of Paul and not the "red" of the Christ. Amazing to me as a ex-Pastor is that hardly any of God's Ten Commandments are followed at all by most mainline churches and their teachings:

- We ignore the Commandment mandating the worship of God "only". Thus our Christian theology is full of idolatry and blasphemy as evidenced by the orthodox positions of Christianity concerning their interpretations of Jesus as being "God" according to the Gospel of John and the later Nicean Creed which undergirds all Christian theology today.
- Our churches are full of icons and statues to which many bow and figurines of "angels" and "Jesuses" adorn our homes because we think it "cute" or "religious"; but yet the Lord says "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth". We never stop to think that this yet today applies to us for our God is an "invisible" God and not a God with form or flesh as the Church has tried to make in their "Jesus". This is what Rome has done to us people. Sadly, the church stands guilty of creating "God in mans' image" and failed to understand that is is "man made in the image of God who is invisible".
- We continually take the name of God in vain; if not in casual cursing in just simple speech and both are forbidden. But are forbidden in this Commandment. God's name is not to be used in "secular" speech.
- We ignore and break the Sabbath Commandment every week by not observing the Sabbath and redefining the day of the Sun, Sunday, as the "Sabbath". Again we can thank Rome and Constantine for this.
- We are a nation that has failed to honor our Fathers and Mothers and neglect the elderly and the lawlessness of our Land testifies to this great sin again our horonable parents who gave us life.
- We completely misunderstand the Commandment that forbids killing never understanding that it is about "premeditated murder" only. In fact the God of the Bible commands "killing" as a judgment upon sin to root out the evil from the world and warns man that he will be judged by God if he fails to purge the "garden of its weeds".
- We completely misunderstand the Commandments forbidding adultery and sanction divorce in our Churches instead of repentance and forgiveness as the goal for adultery when the Commandment really refers to fornication before marriage and not sexual discretions after marriage (see Matt. 19 for more elaboration). According to the Hebraic interpretation adultery is not a "God" sanctioned reason for a divorce; only "fornication" before marriage when the man entered the marriage believing his wife a virgin and later finds out he has been defrauded in the marriage. The man has a right to divorce in this instance if he so chooses but discretions after marriage is the opportunity for God and the couple to seek healing between themselves and work out their problems which led to such a betrayal.
- The Commandment to "not steal" is specific and means "not to kidnap" another person. It does not apply to "stuff" which might be stolen from another's possession. This Commandment is interpreted to refer to only one kind of theft; namely, to someone who kidnaps a person, forces him or her to work for him, and then sells him or her into slavery.

And I could go on.



Most amazing is that the level of brainwashing is so severe that Christians in general are not even aware that this shift of focus away for God's Laws and Commandments had been propagated in the 2nd century. At the beginning, after all the apostles had died, the leaders who replaced them were mostly Gentile pagans. These Gentiles had comparatively little understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures unlike the Jewish apostles and followers of "the Christ in Israel" who had been exposed to the teachings of the Law and the Prophets since birth. This caused a shift in focus to the New Testament (written by fellow converts) and the elimination of anything Jewish. This was very true of the moral codes which Jesus exalted his followers to obey.

**Answer for yourself:** So what caused the church to virtually ignore the Law, the Hebrew Prophets, all the Apostles (except the Gnostic John), and even the teachings of the "Jewish Christ" himself and focus full attention to Paul and his writings on grace? The name is Marcion who is Gnostic.

Marcion was born around 100 C.E. at Sinope, a seaport located on the Black Sea coast of modern Turkey. His father was a leader in the church and so Marcion grew up in fellowship with the church in Asia Minor. Around 138 C.E., he traveled to Rome and became a member of one of the Roman churches. As a wealthy ship-owner, he large contributions to the church and he became a respected member in the Christian community. He was eloquent and learned in the contemporary form of the Gospel and the early Christian community and so gave the impression of being a Christian teacher with apostolic authority.

While Marcion was later condemned as a heretic over his unorthodox views and booted out of the Church in Rome, by the end of the 2nd century his doctrine became a serious threat to the mainstream Christian Church. His strange kind of Christianity had swept across large sections of the Roman Empire.

Marcion's reference was always the teachings of Paul (the only apostle whom he trusted), especially that of the saving grace. In his belief, the saving grace of God was miraculous. He held the Gnostic idea the whole creation to be faulty, being the creation of a lesser god, thus containing no element of the divine. Marcion got it partly right and partly wrong and we need to read closely to understand this if we are to every understand "Dualism" correctly.

Marcion was influenced by Persian dualism which is often called Zoroastrianism which is a belief in two forces in the universe, one good and one bad, who are constantly fighting it out for supremacy. As well Marcion believed that the Creator God who created the material universe was the God of Israel (Demiurge), who was a totally different God from the Father spoken of in the gospel of Christ (the Good God).

**Answer for yourself:** Is Marcion teaching Emanationism? Yes. Believe it or not so far so good as Marcion was expressing Ancient Concepts of Emanationism as taught by the Ancient Spiritual Masters for thousands of years. **But there is a problem with Marcion and his Emanationism and later Dualism that is a departure from what the Ancients believed.**

**Answer for yourself:** What was that? Well the answer comes later in this article so hold on.

It was here in Maricon's idea of Emanationism and the reality of "belief in two forces in the universe, one good and one bad, who are constantly fighting it out for supremacy that we find the seeds for later theological error. **The problem is in Marcion's understanding of the "source" of these opposing powers** which we will get to later.

**Answer for yourself:** Did Marcion see that the "Evil God" came from the Good God (the Absolute) or did he teach that both the Evil God and the Good God were in existence from the beginning? **This is very important for our concept of Emanationism!**

This is where Orthodox Christians and Gnostic Christians part company on the Creation. Orthodox believe Creation (physical world and man) became "corrupt" with Adam and "the Fall" where Gnostics believe Creation was corrupt to begin with since all Creation was the work of the Evil God (Demiurge) while yet the Absolute Spirit was good. Thus we have our basic "Dualism" of light vs dark, good vs bad, etc.

In the Second Century, when Christianity was coming to light as an important new theology, the ideas of personal acquaintance with God and dualistic worldview were old hats. Important for us to notice now is that a tendency towards dualism was evident in the West as far back as Zoroaster, author and prophet of a four thousand year-old Persian religion that we know only as Zoroastrianism. Assuming a dualistic battle between the God of Truth (Ahura Mazda) and the God of Falsehood (Ahriman), Zoroaster displays **the universe as the interplay of these opposing forces in battle, as the two sides share in the Creation**. He understood that in created being which we call "the physical realm" that it is but a picture of the "invisible realm" as Egypt had taught in the beginning; ***"so Above, so Beneath"***. Thus there are basically two opposing Forces or Energies in the Cosmos; we can call them "positive" and "negative" for simplicity. These over time become "God" and "Satan". With the advent of Zoroastrianism, dualism was in place within Western society, and would later be evident in Gnostic scripture. Also neither Greek and the Jewish religion can be said to be decidedly free of all Zoroastrian concepts of "dualism".

Dualism states that two opposing, or opposite, ideas, things, or categories mutually exist. A person holding such views is a dualist. Dualism explains the theory of knowledge by the confrontation of two different realities, subjective or objective; the religious cosmos in the terms of a perpetual conflict between good and evil, which has always existed. **As one examines any dualistic situation he discovers that the two opposites are usually considered as coming from the same or similar source (the Divine Absolute)**. Thus "all comes from the One"; both visible and invisible. Thus this perpetual conflict of good and evil come from the One Absolute. This is a prime dualistic subject which we find over and over again when discussing the history of religion.

**Answer for yourself:** What do we have here? We have the attempt of early mankind to find the origin of "evil" in Creation and as we see he does not want to lay it at the feet of the Absolute One who we desire to be all "love" without "evil".

When hearing this statement of such "dualism" many think it only pertains to recent formalized religions, but such dualism has an ancient aspect as well. This is seen in the ancient religions centered on **animism; that is the belief in spirits of the same genus or origin capable of doing good or benevolent things or evil and injurious things. Understand that it is the results of the actions of these spirits or mediators which determine whether it is good or evil, not the qualities themselves. Since all these spirits are Energies or Forces of nature of the Cosmos they can be good in some respects or circumstances and bad in others but again understand that they all come from the One Absolute.**

Moving onto more highly developed religions one finds that a supreme, all-powerful spirit has emerged, called a great God. According to tribal legends and the Ancient Wisdom collected from around the world this supreme God is not the sole creator of the world, but has an adversary or collaborator who committed a malicious or stupid act that lead to irreparable harm. Thus we have saved the reputation of the "great God" and no evil can be connected to Him.

**Answer for yourself:** Why was this "second God" theorized? Simply to explain the existence of evil, sin, death, destruction, and the existence of suffering that must be kept apart and far away from the "Good God". In protecting God's character and identity and preserving His appearance as "all Good" men theorized the existence of another entity responsible for this suffering and sorrow in this physical Creation. Thus, the birth of "dualism" is a necessity and it follows that we have the later hypothesis that there is a second entity or "God" responsible for the flawed Creation in which we live.

Such legends express the astonishment of men finding themselves in the presence of evil and death, and expressing their belief that these terrible things do not belong to the essence of things, and they are not attributable to the supreme God. Here lies the germ of the dualism; the terrible things are believed to have come from the **second being** even though his **independent origin is never positively expressed**. This being may be a creature of the Supreme God or Absolute, or his origin is omitted.



Yes there are some who will believe that this "second being" had an independent origin and this confuses this whole system of Emanationism and such a one is Marcion as we shall soon see. This is why Rome will take issue with him believing him to believe in two separate "Absolute Gods".

**Answer for yourself:** Where did this dualism all start?

This **dualistic struggle finds its literary origin in Ancient Egypt** where we find it expressed in their religious "myths". This dualistic struggle between good and evil is exhibited between the sun god Re, symbolizing life and truth, and his antagonist snake god Apep (the Greeks called him Apophis) in the ancient Egyptian religion. Apep, a monster living in perpetual darkness, perpetually tried stopping Re's barque on its nightly journey through the underworld. **During this struggle between light and darkness**, the gigantic serpent is wounded by knives and spears hurled by Re's divine entourage. In legend, Apep was the **personification of darkness, evil, and chaos**. Occasionally the deity was victorious for a short duration, but in the end Re triumphed (Sunrise). Apep was slain by Re who cut up his body and burned it (the heat of the Sun). **Again it is very important that we notice that it is observed that both deities have the same divine nature but have opposite objectives**. They find their origin in the Absolute One from which both "good" and "bad" emanate.

The dualism theme is expressed again in the ancient Egyptian religion with the legendary battle between Osiris and Set or Seth. Osiris, the grain god, was considered by some the counterpart of Re after death. He was crucial to Egyptian agriculture; therefore, every king was the divine embodiment of Horus in life and became Osiris after death. From this evolved the Osirian legend found in the Pyramid Texts to be later popularized and embellished by the Greek writer Plutarch. The legend describes Set as the adversary and jealous brother of Osiris who during a drunken party was persuaded by his brother to step into a sarcophagus. Once inside the coffin was nailed shut and thrown into the Nile. This was followed by years of searching by Isis who eventually found the body. She brought it home. On the journey back, she breathed breath into the body and impregnated herself with Osiris' semen and bore his son Horus. **Set was not always depicted as being evil**. According to one legend he helped the sun-god Re when he was about to be swallowed up by Apep. **However, later Set became the personification of evil**.

**Answer for yourself:** What do we see here? **Here again, both parties share a divine nature but have opposite objectives**.

Notice in the following examples down through history we have the same understanding of the Divine Realm passed on from nation to nation over thousands of years.

- The Babylonian mythology shares a similar legend. Marduk, the chief deity and tutelary god of Babylon, engages in the primordial battle with Tiamat, the power of the ocean. He kills her, splitting her in half and uses parts of her corpse to fashion heaven and earth. Tiamat fought him in revenge for the death of Apsu, the deep. These were two opposing deities sharing a divine nature.
- In Greek mythology the primordial battle was waged between Zeus and the Titans, Cronus, his father, in particular. Cronus swallowed all of his children. Zeus escaped the fate by trickery of Rhea, his mother. In battle Zeus overthrew his father, making him vomit up his brothers and sisters and also freed his aunts and uncles whom Cronus had imprisoned (Jordan 296). This ushered in the Olympians. Both deities shared the same nature; one was begotten from the other.
- The strict personification of evil in a deity began with the religion of Zoroastrianism, founded by Zoroaster or Zarathustra. The exact time in which Zoroaster lived is uncertain; many give the date of 6000 BC while others state 1200 BC. In Zoroastrianism the Holy Immortals included Ahura Mazda, Lord of Wisdom, and the six lesser Ahuras which he created through his Holy Spirit, Spenta Mainyu. According to Zoroaster these with other divinities were the Yazatas who helped mankind. Opposing them was Angra Mainyu and the Daevas. This was the premise of the dualism of Zoroastrianism. The basis for the premise was formed by the eternal struggle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. **These were**

**both uncreated spirits, existing eternally in time**, they were destined by nature to be constant combatants within the physical world that Ahura Mazda, the good spirit, created; Angra Mainya, the evil spirit, by nature would continually try to destroy the world and everything in it. The Zoroastrians believed that Angra Mainyu would win some battles but at the end of the world, the eschatological theory, he would be defeated and good would triumph.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch the big difference above in the Zoroastrian concept of Dualism? How does this concept of "dualism" change in Zoroastrianism that causes such a huge impact upon later Judaism and Christianity as we see today? Give up?

It is in Zoroastrianism that the nature of dualism changes and assumes its more permanent characteristic. **The common meaning of a dualistic conflict became good versus evil, right and/or wrong, and so on; the sources of good and evil were separate, both no longer came from a single source** as in the Aegean era. Both sources of "good" and "evil" had independent uncreated origins for their source. Both were essentially eternal Forces and Powers and Energies; equals. There is no longer any Emanationism involved in the sources of "good" and "evil". No longer do we have a "unity" from the Absolute but rather a "war in heaven" between two opposing Powers with separate origins and beginnings. **Now God is fighting Satan; not Satan doing God's bidding!**

The Aegean gods, such as Zeus, were both good and bad; they shared both qualities as their worshippers considered them deities with human traits. **Within the Zoroastrian theogony this changed, good and evil came from separate sources, not one; dualism no longer was a combat between a more powerful versus a weaker god; it now involved the struggle between the good, or perfect, deity against the evil one. This struggle, or war, between equals is to be seen influencing most-later religious philosophies.**

**It is here in Zoroastrianism that the concept of the "All in One" and "Emanationism" is altered and ended for the most part and the influence of Zoroastrianism in later Judaism and even emerging Christianity is responsible for the loss of these Ancient Divine Truths of "Emanationism" from the Absolute God.**

The Christian Gnostics continued the cosmic dualism, but varied it in a different fashion. **Good and evil still existed, but resided in two different Gods; but they yet had the same source.** The Christian God, Yahweh, they called the Demiurge, the "bad God", and they believe the "good God" was impersonal and aloof from the world. Contact with the Absolute was to be made through "His Christ" within mankind. Christ was the "bridge" so to speak. The Demiurge had been born of the Spirit of God and wisdom, personified as Sophia, is the divine creative force. To explain again the evil in creation the Gnostics used as they had before various myths to explain Spiritual realities. Let us look at one. Sophia, without the knowledge of the Absolute God, her mate, gave birth to her son, the Demiurge, a horrible looking child who is the "evil God". Unbeknown to the Demiurge his mother had given him some of her power which contained the Spirit, which he thought was his and with which he created the physical world. When doing this the Gnostics believed the Demiurge entrapped the Spirit (Divine Sparks) in matter. They viewed the Demiurge as being the Yahweh, Christian God, the creator, basing their belief on the statement, "I am God, and there is no one besides me."

For the Gnostics this changed the dynamics of the dualism. It was no longer the opposition between good and evil; they held the Christian God, called Demiurge, was evil representing the Devil; but the opposition was now between Spirit and matter since the Spirit was entrapped in matter. **This oppositional change of "good versus evil" to "spiritual versus material" generated an overwhelming desire to eliminate the material among members of the Gnostic sects.** This desire to eliminate the material was based upon the belief that the Demiurge through creation had entrapped the Spirit, especially in man, in matter, and the only way to ultimately free the Spirit was not to prolong life through propagation and sexual union. This view was part of the intuitive or reflective knowledge, which the Gnostics called "gnosis," which came from the study of man's



inner self or soul and illuminated the Logos to bring salvation.

- A more prominent dualistic influence on Gnosticism was Platonic philosophy. As is well known, Platonic thought is dualistic in a variety of ways. The philosopher, in his cosmological work Timaieus, states that the Earth is created by a Demiurge and that there are two "world souls:" the good, and the not-good, both of which are equal in power. Most Gnostic sects shared this idea, as we have seen. More of Plato's thought than his cosmology displays an innate separation between matter and spirit. Perhaps his most famous idea of all, the "divided line," found in Book VI of the Republic, presents us with a dualism that most definitely sparked off similar currents of thought within the world of human reason. According to this idea, there exist extra-material realms that contain "Ideals" (an important concept to the Gnostics). These Ideals are archetypes – blueprints, as it were – upon which material creations were modeled. The realms of the ideal were much closer to "reality" than the realms of the Created in which we live. He expounds on this idea more firmly in his "Allegory of the Cave" which is highly regarded in Gnostic circles. And, who can forget the famous phrase that so inspired Socrates in the Apology: Gnosti Sauthon - -- "Know thyself." In fact, an excerpt from the Republic was discovered in a cache of gnostic scripture at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945.

It is time to refocus. Central to our purpose in these articles is the obtainment of the metaphysical knowledge of these earliest Ancients and whom they influenced like the earliest Christians regarding their later beliefs about God and the Soul. Let us take one by one the cardinal points of the Gnostic creed and trace them back to their earliest appearance. Central to the above ideas is that before Zoroastrianism *"the All is from the One"* and not separate sources if we recall. This again brings us to "Emanationism" as first understood by the Ancient Egyptians as mentioned before. What we are really talking about here is Quantum Physics.

Emanationism is contemporary with the beginning of high civilization in Egypt. The "Memphite Theology" is a tractate from the Old Kingdom. In it, Ptah, the deity whom the Egyptians of Memphis considered the eldest of the gods, has emanated from him four couples of gods, male and female, in descending order of being. Ptah thought, spoke, and his word created them. Each god or goddess had no other being than the "heart and tongue of Ptah" and by them all things were made and without them was not anything made that was made. Ptah himself, incidentally, is represented not with the ordinary body of a man, but as a swaddled mummy with a huge protruding phallus, the combination of life and death. Earlier still than the Memphite Theology is the Ennead of Heliopolis, where the same four pairs are derived from the creator Atun. This, however, is an ordinary creation myth and does not share with the Memphis tract its remarkable philosophy. The unique idea of Emanationism is that the Great God acts only through his emanations.

Let us continue in the final article in this series as we look at some important historical changes to Emanationism and Dualism.

[Now let us continue with the last article in this series.](#)

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## HIDDEN TEACHINGS OF THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE SOUL #6

Changes were being made to the evolution of this "Dualism" and "Emanationism" over time and from nation to nation down the corridors of history. In Egypt and Judaism as the fruit of Egyptian religion we don't find the concept of a "war" of Good and Evil and the debauching of creation like we will in later Babylonian and later Persian ideas. It never seems to have occurred to the Egyptians or the early Semites that there was anything seriously wrong with the world; "good" and "evil" worked in harmony (ma'at). **But with the rise of Mesopotamian and later Persian religions they are fixated and haunted by the power of evil. This is an important distinction.** The Egyptians were well aware of evil, but they granted it no metaphysical, let alone ontological importance:

- Isis and Osiris saved men from death and the grave.
- The saviors of Persian religion save man from sin, against which, unaided, man, and all creation with him, could not prevail.

We have an abundance of texts which indicate that the Egyptians, like the Quakers, found it relatively easy to be good. The same can be said for Judaism which teaches that the Torah serves to "train the Soul" of man for "goodness. Farther east, the Babylonians, then the Persians, and after them the majority of Christians which built their concept of "good and evil" off of Zoroastrianism seem to have found it difficult indeed.

The Gnostics went still further. Although in Persian religion evil often functions as an autonomous principle, there is no suggestion that creation, matter, or man, is bad as such. This idea, of the intrinsic evil of the world, is the peculiar and distinguishing notion of most of the Gnostic cults.

From Persia comes the concept of the universe as a moral battleground, existence in itself as the struggle of light against darkness. We are familiar with this language in the New Testament and among the Jewish sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls. With it, into Gnosticism, came a whole physics and metaphysics of light which was to survive in various forms in Western thought for centuries.

This "battleground of Emanationism and Dualism" which we see in Heaven above and in Nature below with all of its opposition of light and darkness, positive and negative, warmth and coldness, spring/summer and autumn/winter, the equinoxes and solstices, life and death, is but a picture to teach man of the dualistic struggle within himself and his Soul. In order to understand the Soul of man one must begin with the Gnostic understanding of Whom we call God for this Mystery begins there and true knowledge of the Universe in which we live is best taught there. The Gnostic God concept is more refined than that of most religions. In its way, it unites and reconciles the recognitions of Monotheism and Polytheism, as well as of Theism, Deism and Pantheism. In the Gnostic view, there is a true, ultimate and transcendent Absolute God, who is beyond all created universes and who never created anything in the sense in which the word "create" is ordinarily understood. This is the Ultimate Consciousness, Energy, and Intelligence for all which will be. But from this impersonal, ultimate and transcendent Absolute One came the "good Force/Energy/God" and the "evil Force/Energy/God" which mediates all planes of Creation; both invisible and visible. While this True God did



not fashion or create anything, He (or, It) “emanated” or brought forth from within Himself the substance of all there is in all the worlds, visible and invisible. In a certain sense, it may therefore be true to say that all is God, for all consists of the substance of God. By the same token, it must also be recognized that many portions of the original divine essence have been projected so far from their source that they underwent unwholesome changes in the process which led to corrupt portions of the Emanated Divine Essence.

The basic Gnostic myth has many variations, but all of these refer to Aeons, intermediate deific beings who exist between the ultimate, True God and ourselves. They, together with the True God, comprise the realm of Fullness (Pleroma) wherein the potency of divinity operates fully. The Fullness stands in contrast to our existential state, which in comparison may be called emptiness. One of the aeonial beings who bears the name Sophia (“Wisdom”) is of great importance to the Gnostic world view. As mentioned before in the course of her journeyings, Sophia came to emanate from her own being a flawed consciousness, a being who became the creator of the material and psychic cosmos, all of which he created in the image of his own flaw. This being, unaware of his origins and the Absolute One, imagined himself to be the ultimate and absolute God. Since he took the already existing divine essence within himself he fashioned it into various forms, he is also called the Demiurgos or “half-maker”. There is an authentic half, a true deific component within creation, but it is not recognized by the half-maker and by his cosmic minions, the Archons or “rulers”.

Human nature mirrors the duality found in the world: in part it was made by the false creator God and in part it consists of the light of the True God. Humankind contains a perishable physical and psychic component, as well as a spiritual component which is a fragment of the Divine Essence. This latter part is often symbolically referred to as the **“divine spark”**. The recognition of this **dual nature of the world and of the human being** has earned the Gnostic tradition the epithet of “dualist”. Now it become clearer.

Humans are generally ignorant of the divine spark resident within them. This ignorance is fostered in human nature by the influence of the false creator and his Archons, who together are intent upon keeping men and women ignorant of their true nature and destiny. Thus the cry of the Gnostics to “awaken” to the truth concerning ourselves as living being; half “good” with the potential to do “evil”. Thus the need for instruction, thus the need for the Torah to train the soul. This Torah is interpreted by 4 levels; one of which the Rabbis teach is the “Sod” or “Mystical” meaning of the text. This is the “secret wisdom” taught by the Ancients which helps “awaken the Soul within us”, “the Christ” within us that allows it to fulfill our Soul’s incarnational destiny. Anything that causes us to remain attached to earthly things serves to keep us in enslavement to these lower cosmic rulers. Man has “forgotten” his Divine nature and from where he has come and his Heavenly home. According to Gnostic theology, a series of “falling away” from the Whole and Absolute that is God occurred in eternity which resulted in all that there is today. After the first “fall”, the divine consciousness descended to the level of the divided consciousness; now after another “fall”, it has fallen even further, into the depths of the unconscious; the divine consciousness has been “forgotten.” **It is now humanity’s privilege to discover the potential realms of human existence and face the great challenge of the “ascension of consciousness” through the Man-God-Spirit transformation. And lest we forget the training ground for the Soul is the Torah which means the “instruction” of God intended to perfect ourselves in our Earthy sojourn.**

Once souls fell into the lower levels of consciousness, they became enamored of it and burned with the desire to experience the pleasures of matter. The souls then no longer wanted to disengage itself from these lower levels. Thus the world was born. From that moment souls forgot themselves. They forgot they original habitation, their true center and eternal being.

Gnosticism proceeds from one fundamental insight: this world in which we find ourselves is thoroughly and irretrievably less than holy. Thus the admonition given all mankind:

***Lev 20:7 7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. (KJV)***

The soul is trapped in a prison of flesh, and the flesh is intrinsically less than divine. According to Gnostic theology as stated above, this whole creation of the cosmos came about as the result of a tragicomic mistake: the

fall of the Soul from God. Thanks to the advent of the Absolute God's Emanations, "the Christ" in the lower realms of consciousness, the power of reconciling the fallen souls has been given to restore the Oneness with our Creator "good God" and usher in the kingdom of light over the kingdom of flesh and matter. The unity of the Godhead is assured thanks to the introduction of the new uniting force, the Logos, the part of God who acts in the flesh and the material. It is important to distinguish the Logos (Christ) from the personification of "the Christ" in religious texts named Jesus who is representative of a "complete and perfected" person. Any person has the potential of becoming a Logos but it is the example of a perfected Soul named and exemplified by this "Jesus" that we as men and women can learn that we likewise are incarnated as a Logos ourselves and therefore we can become a Christ on earth as our example give us in the "Jesus Story". You see the "Jesus Story" is the story of the Soul; a perfected Soul which is our goal in our Earthly existence.

We, as humans, cannot comprehend the omnipotent power available to us until we utilize the Christ power. When we effectively use the divine "Christ awareness" we have the ability to help in the liberation of the imprisoned "sparks of divinity" from flesh and rejoin them to the Source. The divine plan of creation will become complete as the divine outpouring of Christ gnosis liberates humanity from ignorance. The result of this will be the redemption of all human beings.

The Christ power can only liberate souls through the call and revelation of Christ gnosis to, *"Awake, remember who you are and where you come from!"* It is time to act the part. This begins with repentance and instruction in the Torah and the Laws and Commandments of God. Now you understand that "grace" comes as we merit it by trying to obey the intended program for our Soul in the "Jesus Story" which is nothing more than the Torah lived-out in an example for us. But since the soul cannot by itself hear the gnosis, the Christ power resorts to elaborate strategies to create the conditions for which all souls will be saved.

Christian Gnostics felt that initiation into the Cosmic Christ gnosis is inseparable from *"the light which lighteth every person coming into the world."* It is this light within, our Higher Self, which each individual must bring to at-one-ment with the divine Source if liberation is to occur.

As more and more people hear the call to "Wake up!" and attain the Christ gnosis and become liberated, their souls are received back into the bosom of Divine Consciousness. The soul becomes free from unholy flesh and the cycle of birth and rebirth. Christian Gnostics seek to achieve this by cultivating the Higher Self within people to seek reunification with the Godhead. But each soul returning to its divine source must, after death, pass through the various levels of consciousness. Sometimes Christian Gnostics describe seven of these heavenly realms, other times ten.

Death releases the divine spark from its lowly prison, the body, but if there has not been a substantial work of Gnosis undertaken by the soul prior to death, it becomes likely that the divine spark will be hurled back into, and then re-embodied within, the pangs and slavery of the physical world. Not all humans are spiritual (pneumatics) and thus ready for Gnosis and liberation. Some are earthbound and materialistic beings (hyletics), who recognize only the physical reality. Others live largely in their psyche (psychics). Such people usually mistake the Demiurge for the True God and have little or no awareness of the spiritual world and the aeons (angels) beyond matter and mind. In the course of history, humans progress from materialistic sensate slavery, by way of ethical religiosity, to spiritual freedom and liberating Gnosis. As the scholar G. Quispel wrote: "The world-spirit in exile must go through the Inferno of matter and the Purgatory of morals to arrive at the spiritual Paradise." This kind of evolution of consciousness was envisioned by the Gnostics, long before the concept of evolution was known.

Man is in need of "salvation" from his plight as souls entrapped in bodies capable of such evil. Evolutionary forces alone are insufficient, however, to bring about spiritual freedom. Humans are caught in a predicament consisting of physical existence combined with ignorance of their true origins, their essential nature and their ultimate destiny. To be liberated from this predicament, human beings require help, although they must also contribute their own efforts. From earliest times Messengers of the Light have come forth from the True God in order to assist humans in their quest for Gnosis. Only a few of these salvific figures or "Avatars" are mentioned in Gnostic scripture; some of the most important are Seth (the third Son of Adam), the Jewish Christ who



teaches through the Jewish Faith and Religion, Paul, Marcion, Basilides, Valentinus and, Prophet Mani, C. Jung, etc. The majority of Gnostics always looked to these and other teaches who taught the Gnostic Christ, the Jewish Christ, as the principal savior figure (the Soter).

Gnostics do not look to salvation from sin (original or other), but rather from the ignorance of which sin is a consequence. **Ignorance or should I say ignorance of spiritual realities is dispelled only by Gnosis, and the decisive revelation of Gnosis is brought by the Messengers of Light, especially by Christ, the Logos of the True God who lives and operates in our fleshly bodies.** It is not by His suffering and death but by His life of teaching and His imparted revelation and illumination within man that Christ establishes the mysteries and performs his work of salvation in each man and woman. The Gnostic concept of salvation, like other Gnostic concepts, is a subtle one. On the one hand, Gnostic salvation may easily be mistaken for an unmediated individual experience, a sort of spiritual do-it-yourself project. Gnostics hold that the potential for Gnosis, and thus, of salvation is present in every man and woman, and that salvation is not vicarious but individual. At the same time, they also acknowledge that Gnosis and salvation can be, indeed must be, stimulated and facilitated in order to effectively arise within consciousness. This stimulation is supplied by Messengers of Light who, in addition to their teachings, establish salvific mysteries (sacraments; baptism, passover/eucharist, anointing with oil, marriage, mystery of the bridal chamber) which can be administered by apostles of the Messengers and their successors. One needs also remember that knowledge of our true nature, as well as other associated realizations, are withheld from us by our very condition of earthly existence. The True God of transcendence is unknown in this world, in fact He is often called the Unknown Father. It is thus obvious that revelation from on High is needed to bring about salvation. The indwelling spark must be awakened from its terrestrial slumber by the saving knowledge that comes "from without".

At times in the New Testament we encounter the "Paul Problem" where Paul both "taught the Law" and "taught others to not obey the Law". This is confusing until you understand Paul was a Gnostic and Gnostics came to possess an "inner knowing" that eclipsed the knowing of the mind. I pray you understand what comes next and while you read this remember that there are levels of mankind as understood by Gnostics.

- Hyletics are people earthbound and are strictly materialistic beings who recognize only the physical reality.
- 'Psyche' is the word we get 'psychology' from, and you may remember the tale of Cupid and Psyche, from Greek myth. It can refer to the personality, to one's character, soul, etc. Often it is translated as soul, but it can in some contexts refer to emotions and instincts, one's life energy (similar to the animating essence/anima/soul), too. So to say someone was limited by their psyche, in religious terms, or is 'soulish' would mean their psyche is limiting or acting up. **What is translated as carnal fruit in Paul's letters, is really 'psychic' fruit, if you look at the Greek. The psyche acts up and causes needless strife, meddles or tries to control others, enjoys judging others, etc.** Spiritual fruit on the other hand transcends the psyche, and might even heal/transform the psyche. **In some Gnostic texts, the way the psychics are described indicates they were understood to be people who have the capacity to improve their character and to purify their soul, to seek to do more of what is right and wise, but who are nonetheless not aware of, understanding of, open to, or receptive of, deeper spiritual teachings of Gnosis.** In certain Gnostic texts/teachings, 'psychics' was contrasted with 'pneumatics'.
- **Pneumatics are spiritual people, and in Gnostic texts they are people who are rising above the merely psychic.**

Now knowing this we are ready for what comes next. If the words "ethics" or "morality" are taken to mean a system of rules, then Gnosticism is opposed to them both. But yet Gnostics taught God's Law and Harmony as a way of life. **So we are missing something here.** Typical Gnostics taught that such systems of Laws usually originate with the Demiurge and are covertly designed to serve his purposes. **If, on the other hand, morality is said to consist of an inner integrity arising from the illumination of the indwelling spark, a spark that embodies these Laws and Commandments of God, then the Gnostic will embrace this spiritually informed existential ethic as ideal. He will live as "the Christ" that lives within him. He will be "in**

**Christ" as Paul speaks. We are all "Christs in waiting"!** This explains why Paul grew to a higher understanding than the literal obedience of a Law for he came to understand the intent behind the Law; a higher Law. When not realizing that at times his audiences needed these "simple laws" for they were yet "psychics" needing more training of the Soul he seems to rush to move past these Laws hoping to make them "pneumatics" that we have a Paul problem. They simply were not ready for these "higher laws"; they had not got the elementary things of the Laws down good enough yet. Thus the rebuke by James in Acts 21:

*Acts 21:21 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. (KJV)*

The Christ taught these higher Laws as did Paul:

*Matt 5:21-22 21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (KJV)*

*Matt 5:27-28 27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (KJV)*

I think you see the point. It takes time for a seed to grow and we are all at different levels of Spiritual Growth of our Soul.

**To the Gnostic, commandments and rules are not salvific; they are not substantially conducive to salvation. Judaism never taught that one is saved by obeying the Torah! That is why the Law does not save...but it elevates one "saved".** Rules of conduct may serve numerous ends, including the structuring of an ordered and peaceful society, and the maintenance of harmonious relations within social groups. Rules, however, are not relevant to salvation; that is brought about only by Gnosis. One must "KNOW" why he must obey these Laws of God; one must come to know that he is a Divine creation and to do any less is a waste of his Soul. Morality therefore needs to be viewed primarily in temporal and secular terms; it is ever subject to changes and modifications in accordance with the spiritual development of the individual.

As noted in the discussion above, "hyletic materialists" usually have little interest in morality, while "psychic disciplinarians" often grant to it a great importance. In contrast, "Pneumatic spiritual" persons are generally more concerned with other, higher matters. Different historical periods also require variant attitudes regarding human conduct. Thus both the Manichaean and Cathar Gnostic movements, which functioned in times where purity of conduct was regarded as an issue of high import, responded in kind. The present period of Western culture perhaps resembles in more ways that of second and third century Alexandria. It seems therefore appropriate that Gnostics in our age adopt the attitudes of classical Alexandrian Gnosticism, wherein matters of conduct were largely left to the insight of the individual.

Gnosticism embraces numerous general attitudes toward life: it encourages non-attachment and non-conformity to the world, a *"being in the world, but not of the world"*; a lack of egotism; and a respect for the freedom and dignity of other beings. This is just the opposite of Roman Christianity. Nonetheless, it appertains to the intuition and wisdom of every individual "Gnostic" to distill from these principles individual guidelines for their personal application.



***Phil 2:12 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (KJV)***

When Confucius was asked about death, he replied: "Why do you ask me about death when you do not know how to live?" This answer might easily have been given by a Gnostic. To a similar question posed in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Jesus answered that human beings must come by Gnosis to know the ineffable, divine reality from whence they have originated, and whither they will return. This transcendental knowledge must come to them while they are still embodied on earth.

Death does not automatically bring about liberation from bondage in the realms of the Demiurge. Those who have not attained to a liberating Gnosis while they were in embodiment may become trapped in existence once more. It is quite likely that this might occur by way of the cycle of rebirths. Gnosticism does not emphasize the doctrine of reincarnation prominently, but it is implicitly understood in most Gnostic teachings that those who have not made effective contact with their transcendental origins while they were in embodiment would have to return into the sorrowful condition of earthly life.

In regard to salvation, or the fate of the spirit and soul after death, one needs to be aware that help is available. Valentinus, the greatest of Gnostic teachers, taught that Christ and Sophia await the spiritual man -- the pneumatic Gnostic -- at the entrance of the Pleroma, and help him to enter the bride chamber of final reunion. Ptolemaeus, disciple of Valentinus, taught that even those not of pneumatic status, the psychics, could be redeemed and live in a heavenworld at the entrance of the Pleroma. In the fullness of time, every spiritual being will receive Gnosis and will be united with its higher Self -- the angelic Twin -- thus becoming qualified to enter the Pleroma. None of this is possible, however, without earnest striving for Gnosis.

**Answer for yourself:** How would like to have lived before the rise of the mighty Roman Empire and heard the above as the "true gospel" as the teachings of "the Christ"? Having now heard this how do we reconcile the Gnostic Gospel or can we with the Roman version and reinterpretation of the Gnostic "true gospel"? We can't. That is the problem. Now you know why on my other websites I mention the First New Testament and the Roman Second New Testament.

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## SCHOLARS SPEAK OUT ON PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

Identifying forgeries in the Bible often calls for some hard detective work. There is no "royal road." Every clue, every nuance, no matter how subtle or insignificant it may seem, must be followed to its logical conclusion. Sometime the results are ambiguous and frustrating. They remain questionable, and I will point out a couple of examples. But perseverance often pays off, and the data confirm a suspected Bible forgery. So, although some of the suspected Bible forgeries may ultimately be proved authentic, others certainly will be substantiated. The so-called Pauline epistles are a good case in point.

Paul was a Jew born at Tarsus, a city in Cilicia. The year of his birth is not known exactly but scholars put it at about 5 CE. His Jewish name was "Saul" which he used within the Jewish community with "Paul" being the Greek version. He is believed to have died in Rome around 65 CE. Paul was a contemporary of Jesus. Outside the New Testament letters (epistles), there are no reliable sources for his life. In the New Testament the so-called Pauline epistles begin after the Book of Acts and include the next thirteen entries. They all begin with the words "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the . . ."

**Answer for yourself:** But did he really write them?

According to scholarly analyses, Romans, I and II Corinthians, I Thessalonians and Galatians are genuine. Opinion is divided on the authenticity of Philippians and Philemon. Ephesians, Colossians, II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy and Titus are held by most scholars to be forgeries written considerably later than the time of Paul. The story of Paul's conversion to Christianity and his career as a missionary is given in the Book of Acts and was probably written many years after his death. Therefore its authenticity is also questionable.

The purpose of this article is to review the bases for evaluating the Pauline epistles as to their authenticity or lack thereof. Before reviewing the epistles themselves, however, let us consider some general observations of scholars concerning the Pauline epistles and other early Christian documents.

### THE JESUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Graham, Lloyd M., Deceptions and Myths of the Bible, 1979

**Page 410:** Paul is but the Moses of the New Testament, carrying on where Joseph or in this case, Jesus, left off. The cue to this parallel is given in Acts, chapter 7 which recounts the whole story of Moses so that we may see the connection.

Martin, Michael, The Case Against God, 1991

**Page 38:** The first Christian documents to characterize Jesus in a way that roughly corresponds to the accounts in the gospels (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, 1 Clement, seven letters of Ignatius of Antioch) were written somewhere between 90 and 110. This is after the gospels had been written and circulated. Why does no



biographical information appear in the earlier documents (2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 1 Peter and possibly also the letters of James and 1, 2, and 3 John?) The only plausible answer to this question is that Jesus' biography is pure fiction invented late in the 1st century. It was unknown to the earlier writers such as Paul.

**Page 56:** An important clue against the historicity of the Jesus of the gospels is that the early and later non-Pauline epistles picture him differently. Those likely to have been written before 90 (2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and James,) refer to Jesus in basically the same way as do the authentic Pauline epistles. They stress the resurrection and second coming but do not refer to the ethical teachings or the miracles Jesus allegedly performed; they say nothing about his birth, baptism, trial, crucifixion, and death. On the other hand, the later epistles, those written after 90 (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus,) begins to portray Jesus as he is in the gospels placing him in a definite time period as do other late first century documents such as 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude, the first epistle of Clement, and the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. **They obviously were influenced by the gospels.**

Ephesians, thought to have been written between 80 and 90, is one of the earlier Pauline forgeries. It gives no detail of Jesus' life and teachings and consequently provides no confirmation that Jesus lived in the early part of the first century. In 4:25-32 the author advocates speaking the truth, controlling anger, doing honest work, and being mutually forgiving and kind, yet he never cites the teachings of Jesus. One can only infer that he had no knowledge of them.

Wells, G. A., **The Historical Evidence for Jesus**, 1988

**Page 20:** - It often comes as a shock to many lay readers to learn that the (authentic) epistles of Paul predate the gospels. Although the gospels present versions of the life of Jesus (4BCE? - 30?), they were actually written between 70 and 110. The authentic Pauline epistles were written between 50 and 60. **Therefore, it is these epistles, not the gospels, which provide the most plausible clues as to how the earliest Christians regarded Jesus.**

**Page 22:** The Pauline epistles considered to be genuine are so completely silent concerning the events that were later recorded in the gospels as to suggest that these events were not known to Paul, who could not have been ignorant of them had they really happened.

These letters make not a single reference to the parents of Jesus nor to the virgin birth. They never refer to a place of birth (for example, by referring to him as Jesus of Nazareth). They give no indication of the time or place of his earthly existence. They do not refer to his trial before a Roman official, nor to Jerusalem as the place of execution. They mention neither John the Baptist, nor Judas Iscariot, Jesus' alleged betrayer. They do, of course, mention Peter, but do not imply that he, any more than Paul himself, had known Jesus personally and been associated with him during his alleged lifetime.

Paul's failure to mention Peter's denial of Christ (Mk.14:30, 66-72, and parallels) is highly significant. Paul's letter to the Galatians reveals that his position as leader of the Christian community at Antioch was threatened by Peter (a.k.a. Cephas), whom he calls a hypocrite (Gal. 2:11-13). The denial coupled with Jesus' stern warning in Matthew 10:33 would have been a powerful weapon he could have used against Peter. Why didn't he? Paul's silence is rightly interpreted as compelling evidence that the denial story is a late Christian forgery.

Paul claims to have won converts "by the power of signs and wonders" (Rom. 15:19). He seems to be completely unaware that Jesus said that there shall be no sign given to this generation (Mark 8:12). He also fails to mention the many wonders (miracles) which, according to the gospels, Jesus routinely performed. He obviously didn't know of them.

Another striking feature of Paul's letters is that one could never gather from them that Jesus had been an ethical teacher. In fact, Paul presents a considerable amount of ethical teachings in his own name, with no suggestion that Jesus had taught anything of the kind, even though the gospels later put exactly the same doctrines into Jesus' mouth.

## **AUTHENTIC**

**Mack, Burton L., Who Wrote The New Testament, 1995**

**Page 126:** First and Second Corinthians are authentic but are actually collections of portions of six different letters.

**Page 137:** Romans is authentic. It provides a comprehensive elaboration of Paul's theology and is the earliest systematic treatise of a rationale for the Christian myth.

**Remsburg, John E., The Christ, 1909**

**Page 41:** Four Epistles, - Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians - are generally admitted to be the genuine writings of Paul. They are believed to have been written about a quarter of a century after the alleged death of Jesus. In fact, they are the only documents in the entire New Testament whose authenticity can be maintained and whose author is known.

**Robertson, Archibald, The Origins Of Christianity, 1954**

**Page 105:** The Paul of Galatians and the Paul the Acts are two different men.

First Corinthians is for the most part authentic but appears to have been altered probably after Paul's death (10:1-22.)

**Page 109:** Second Corinthians affords conclusive evidence that the Jesus of Pauline Christianity was not the same as the Jesus portrayed in the gospels. The Pauline Christ is "the Spirit" (3:17-18) and "the image of God" (4:4) as opposed to the real person of the gospels.

**Page 144:** Philippians is composed of three letter fragments crudely joined together.

**Wells, G. A., The Historical Evidence for Jesus, 1988**

**Page 21:** Romans, 1& 2 Corinthians and Galatians are universally accepted as authentic. The computer techniques tried on them by Morton and McLeman have confirmed that they have a common author. Internal evidence indicates that this author wrote before 70, for the references to his contacts with a Christian community at Jerusalem show that the catastrophic destruction of that city in the Judeo/Roman War (67 - 70) had not yet occurred. Indeed, Paul must have been a Christian before 40 for he tells how King Aretas of the Nabateans, who is known to have died in that year, had sought to have him arrested because of his Christian activities (2 Cor. 11:32). He probably wrote somewhere between 55 and 60 for he tells the Galatians that he had been a Christian for at least fourteen years at the time of writing.

## **THE PASTORALS**

**Eddy, Patricia G., Who Tampered With The Bible? 1993**

**Page 26:** Although purported to have been written by Paul, the relatively complex church organization reflected by the Pastorals did not exist until many years after Paul's death.

**Mack, Burton L., Who Wrote The New Testament, 1995**

**Page 206:** The Pastorals were undoubtedly written during the first half of the 2nd century. They were not included in Marcion's list of Paul's letters (ca.140). Quotations from them first appear in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* (180) and their content fits nicely into the situation and thought of the church in the mid-second century. Their attribution to Paul is a forgery for their language and thought are clearly unPauline. Also, references to particular occasions in the lives of Titus, Timothy, and Paul do not fit with reconstructions of that history taken from the authentic letters.

**The New Oxford Annotated Bible**

**Page 300 NT:** The vocabulary and style of these letters differ widely from the acknowledged letters of Paul;



some of his leading theological themes are entirely absent (the union of the believer with Christ, the power and witness of the Spirit, freedom from the law), and some of the expressions bear a different meaning from that in his customary usage ("the faith" as a synonym for the Christian religion rather than the believer's relationship to Christ).

### Oxford Companion to the Bible

**Page 574 (Paraphrase):** Second Timothy, although attributed to Paul, is found by many scholars to be so unPauline in vocabulary, style, theological concepts, church order, emphasis on tradition and in contrast with the chronology of his career as given in Acts and Romans, that it is widely considered to be a forgery.

**Reimsberg, John E., The Christ, 1909**

**Page 41:** That the Pastorals are forgeries is now conceded by all critics. According to German critics they belong to the second century. They were certainly composed after the death of Paul.

**Robertson, Archibald, The Origins Of Christianity, 1954**

**Page 129:** As to the Pastorals, most scholars now agree that they are second-century forgeries. They deal with second-century situations. These documents were not written by Paul.

**Wells, G.A., Did Jesus Exist? 1986**

**Page 17-18:** It is widely agreed that the Pastorals are mostly forgeries although Titus and 2 Timothy may contain some genuine notes from Paul.

**Wells, G. A., The Historical Evidence for Jesus, 1988**

**Page 90:** Analyses show all the Pastorals were from the same hand but not from Paul's hand. For example, Paul's theology is very imperfectly represented in them. Also, the controversy over keeping the Jewish law was a hot topic in the authentic Paulines. Whereas in the Pastorals it is no longer an issue. Therefore, they must be of a later date.

**Page 94:** The church hierarchy described in the Pastorals is much too advanced to represent that of the early church of Paul's day. In 1 Tim. 3:6 it says "the bishop must not be a recent convert," a statement which shows that at the time of writing the church had been in existence for quite some time.

## SECOND THESSALONIANS

**Eddy, Patricia G., Who Tampered With The Bible? 1993**

**Page 184:** Second Thessalonians was forged in Paul's name shortly after his death or during the late stages of his imprisonment in Rome. Scholars believe it was written to offset the disappointment and unrest then rising in the Christian community resulting from the unfulfilled promise of an imminent second coming (2 Thes. 2:1-8).

**Mack, Burton L., Who Wrote The New Testament, 1995**

**Page 112:** Second Thessalonians was not written by Paul. It lacks the personal warmth, reminiscences, and references characteristic of the authentic letters. Almost one-third of it is verbatim copy from 1st Thessalonians. The eschatology reflects a development of Christian apocalyptic thinking of the kind that took place only after the Judeo/Roman war. Second Thessalonians adds nothing to our knowledge of Paul's gospel. Its only importance is in documenting the fact that some "Pauline epistles" were forged.

**Reimsberg, John E., The Christ, 1909**

**Page 41-42:** Second Thessalonians, a self evident forgery, declares 1st Thessalonians to be a forgery (3:17).

**Robertson, Archibald, The Origins Of Christianity, 1954**

**Page 108:** Second Thessalonians is a forgery. Its vocabulary is peculiar; it deals with a theme (the persecution of the righteous which is to precede the second coming) mentioned nowhere else in the authentic Pauline epistles; and it seems to be written expressly to discredit the statement in 1st Thessalonians that "the day of the Lord"

will come "as a thief in the night" (5:2,) i.e., any day now and without warning.

Wells, G.A., Did Jesus Exist? 1986

Pages 17-18: Second Thessalonians is considered to be a forgery. It presents an ecclesiastical organization of a more advanced kind than existed in Paul's day.

That letters were written in Paul's name (forged) is clear from exhortations not to be misled "by some letters purporting to be from us" (2 Thess. 2:2,) and from the fact that the author of this epistle finds it necessary (3:17) to authenticate himself with his signature.

Wells, G. A., The Historical Evidence for Jesus, 1988

Page 49-50: Most investigators regard Second Thessalonians (half the length of the first) as having been derived from the first letter. If Paul had written Second Thessalonians, it seems unlikely that he would have used so many of the same phrases. Also, The second letter is in an entirely different style than the first.

Second Thessalonians contradicts First Thessalonians regarding the second coming. In the first letter Jesus is expected to return soon and will come unheralded "like a thief in the night," at a time of apparent peace and security (5:1-3). In Second Thessalonians the second coming is not to be expected soon. According to chapter 2 it will be preceded by a series of upheavals. So the contradiction is sharp. If the end will be preceded by catastrophes, then it will not come when all is peace and security.

It is difficult to assign a precise date to Second Thessalonians. However, most scholars suggest the mid-80s.

## **EPHESIANS & COLOSSIANS**

Mack, Burton L., Who Wrote The New Testament, 1995

Page 183: The letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, thought to have been written between 80 and 90, were not written by Paul. There is no suggestion of the personal Paul in either of them. The style, the vocabulary, and the rhetoric are different from the authentic Paulines. They were written in Paul's name after his death probably by scribes loyal to the school that survived him. They are included among the Pauline letters because by the time the church started drawing up lists of literature acceptable for public reading in the third and fourth centuries, Ephesians and Colossians were already a part of the "letters of Paul."

Martin, Michael, The Case Against God, 1991

Page 184: In Ephesians Paul's teachings are diluted. No mention is made of his heated arguments for freedom from the Jewish law, the justification of sinners, faith in Christ, scriptural precedence, epic revisions or apocalyptic scenarios and threats. These are the topics that dominate the authentic letters.

Page 188: Paul used the term "congregation" to refer to a local group whereas the author of Ephesians used the term in the singular to refer to the church universal.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible

Page 272 NT: There are important contrasts between Ephesians and the letters that we can confidently ascribe to Paul. Many of the words in Ephesians do not appear elsewhere in the apostle's correspondence, and some important terms have a different meaning here from their meaning in letters that are surely Paul's. The style, with its loose collection of phrases and clauses and long sentences, is not characteristic of Paul's writing. Ephesians is, therefore, judged to be a forgery.

Wells, G. A., The Historical Evidence for Jesus, 1988

Page 21: Colossians is judged to have been written not by Paul but by one of his pupils. Paul's ideas as expressed in Romans (6:3-5) have been greatly modified.

Page 53: Ephesians was written about 90, some 25 years after Paul's death. During Paul's lifetime the terms for admitting gentiles into the church was at the core of a protracted controversy. Ephesians addresses the gentiles



(2:11) in a situation where such problems have been solved. Therefore, it has to be of a much later date.

Wells, G.A., Did Jesus Exist? 1986

**Pages 17-18:** Colossians and Ephesians are considered forgeries. They present an ecclesiastical organization of a far more advanced kind than existed in Paul's day. For example, according to Ephesians 2:20-21 the faithful are said to be dependent for salvation not directly on Jesus but on officers of the Church. This is a clear contradiction of 1 Cor. 3:10-11 which reads: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

## **THE BOOK OF HEBREWS**

The Epistle to the Hebrews, although not designated a Pauline epistle, is included here out of interest.

Graham, Lloyd M., Deceptions and Myths of the Bible, 1979

**Page 410:** "The Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Barnabas, not by Paul" said Tertullian (160?-230?)

**Page 410:** "Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews God only knows," Origen (185?-254?)

Mack, Burton L., Who Wrote The New Testament, 1995

**Page 189:** The author of Hebrews is unknown. However, it was not Paul. Its concept of Christianity is different from any of the early Christian writers.

Remsburg, John E., The Christ, 1909

**Page 42:** Hebrews does not purport to be a Pauline document. Martin Luther says in the Standing Preface to his N. T., "The Epistle to the Hebrews is not by Paul, nor, indeed, by any apostle." In fact, the spurious origin of Hebrews is recognized right away because it never claims authorship by Paul.

Wells, G. A., The Historical Evidence for Jesus, 1988

**Page 55:** Many Bibles ascribe Hebrews to Paul although it does not purport to come from him and is not written in his style. A major concern of the author of Hebrews is to argue that God had set aside as outmoded the sacrificial system of the old covenant. But the writer who intended to discredit Jewish sacrificial ritual might reasonably be expected to point to the destruction of the temple in 70, had he been writing after this date. If he had written after 70 he could hardly have been unaware of this catastrophic event. For this reason it is reasonable to assume that Hebrews was written sometime between 60 and 70.

The failure of the author to refer to gospel material germane to his argument is important. He was obviously unaware of the gospels and the Jesus they portray. Also, the author takes the view (unknown to Paul) that there can be no second repentance (6:4-6). Apostasy (the denial of scripture) is the unforgivable sin. Therefore, he could not have been aware of the story of Peter's denial.

## **CONCLUSION**

Of the thirteen epistles ascribed to Paul in the Bible, only five can be identified as authentic with any degree of certainty. Yet, all thirteen are headed with the bold inscription, ***THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO . . .*** Such blatant subterfuge by the writers of these ancient religious documents in the face of undeniable evidence amounts to a most scandalous and irresponsible deception. As we have found and are continuing to see for ourselves is that the later writers of the New Testament were refuting Marcion's First New Testament and his "allegorical" Christ. This refutation consisted of letters forged in the name of Paul in order to not only claim authority for these forgeries by drawing upon the name of Paul but also to make it appear that Paul was anti-Gnostic when in fact the reverse is true. Marcion, a strong advocate of Paul, collected all the known letters of Paul that existed in and around 140 and presented them and his "allegorical" Christ in the First New Testament. Rome will counter this later through proto-Catholics like Irenaeus and others through the altering

these earliest documents as well as the pure invention of others. Through deception, lying, and deceit Rome will alter the earliest held beliefs about "the Christ" and turn this Spiritual concept into a man and we find this man as Christ Jesus of the New Testament. Not only through the forging of the Gospels but the corruption of existing Pauline writings and the creation of others Rome was able to create a historical Jesus and make it appear as if Paul was a supporter of this historical Christ as well. If one takes the time to sift through what was contained in the First New Testament of Marcion and at the same time is familiar with Gnosticism and their allegorical understanding of the Christ then this deception become as plain as the nose on your face. Thus the scholars and their testimony above which helps us see the facts for themselves. Much written later in Paul's name is completely opposite of not only what he believed but the Jerusalem church as well concerning "the Christ." I know of no minister of the gospel who has ever had the intestinal fortitude go before his congregation and make this revelation. They, instead, proudly promote themselves as paragons of virtue and honesty; purveyors of truth - the only truth. Either ignorance of these facts or intellectual dishonesty is their stock in trade. During my life I have met both but far and away they simply don't know since never studying hard enough to learn these things.

*Rom 11:25-26 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*  
*(KJV)*





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# PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

Table summarizing the evaluation of the Pauline epistles as rendered by seven recognized Bible scholars (see References).

**A = authentic, F = forgery, Q = questionable, ? = not given.**

Epistles	Eddy <sup>1</sup>	Mack <sup>2</sup>	Martin <sup>3</sup>	Remsberg <sup>4</sup>	Robertson <sup>5</sup>	Teeple <sup>6</sup>	Wells <sup>7</sup>
Romans	A	A	A	A	Q	A	A
1 Cor.	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2 Cor.	A	A	A	A	F	A	A
Galatians	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Ephesians	F	F	F	F	?	F	F
Philippians	A	A	Q	Q	F	A	Q
Colossians	?	F	Q	F	F	F	F
1 Thes.	A	A	A	Q	A	A	Q
2 Thes.	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
1 Timothy	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
2 Timothy	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Titus	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Philemon	A	A	Q	Q	A	A	Q

## REFERENCES

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2 Mack, Burton L.; *Who Wrote the New Testament?*

3 Martin, Michael; *The Case Against Christianity.*

4 Remsberg, John E.; *The Christ.*

5 Robertson, Archibald; *The Origins of Christianity.*

6 Teeple, Howard M.; *Personal correspondence.*

7 Wells, G. A.; *The Historical Evidence for Jesus.*



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# THE NEW TESTAMENT & MODERN SCHOLARSHIP...HOW MANY "CHRISTS" ARE THERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever taken the time to make comparisons between different versions of the same event found in several Gospels? If you have then there can be no doubt that a complete reading of the Gospels, or the genealogies of Jesus for example, is likely to disturb Christians profoundly.

## THE PROBLEM THAT EXISTS BEFORE WE EVER START TO STUDY NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE

I must digress into some history before we take up the issues to be addressed in this and following articles. In editions of the Bible produced for widespread publication, introductory notes more often than not set out a collection of ideas that would tend to persuade the reader that the Gospels hardly raise any problems concerning:

- the personalities and identities of the authors of the various books,
- the authenticity of the texts
- later alterations, addition, deletions, and changes to these texts in our New Testaments as seen over time as theologies changed due to the "winners" and "losers" of theological wars
- the truth of the descriptions of events in what we are reading in the New Testament as "received inerrant and infallible truths"

In spite of the fact that there are so many unknowns concerning authors of whose identity we are not at all sure, we find a wealth of precise information in this kind of introductory note. Often they present as a certainty what is pure hypothesis, or they state that such-and-such an evangelist was an eye-witness of the events, while specialists and modern scholars and archeologists today claim and prove the opposite. We are led to believe that the time that elapsed between the end of Jesus' ministry and the appearance of the texts of the Gospels and much of the New Testament is drastically reduced when objective study into history and modern scholarship will reveal just the opposite. Paul's name is placed upon 2/3 of the New Testament when in fact scholars today show us that more than likely only seven epistles can be authentically attributed to Paul. That means much was later added to the New Testament in "Paul's name" in attempts to change what Paul originally taught in his earlier and authentic epistles. Traditional Christian tradition would have one believe that these "books" attributed to Paul or the apostles like Matthew, Mark, John, etc., were written by one man taken from an oral tradition, when in fact specialists have pointed out adaptations and alterations to the texts over extended amount of time. Of course, certain difficulties of interpretation are mentioned here and there, but they ride rough shod over glaring contradictions that must strike anyone who thinks about them.



When adaptations, changes, alterations, and contradictions of the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are pointed out, and we see the way **texts handed down to us have been corrupted**, the presence of obscure, incomprehensible, contradictory, improbable, and even absurd passages comes as much less of a surprise. The same may be said of texts which are incompatible with today's proven reality, thanks to scientific progress. **Observations such as these denote the element of human participation in the writing and modification of the texts.**

Admittedly, in the last few decades, objective research on the Scriptures has gained attention. **Many modern scholars warn that 'one should not take literally' facts reported about Jesus by the Gospels, because they are 'writings suited to an occasion' or 'to combat', whose authors 'are writing down the traditions of their own community about Jesus'.** Little by little the truth concerning the New Testament is coming to light however. **At the core of these New Testament writings is a true battle of sorts; a war of "theologies" fought on paper as we shall see between different camps who held different and opposing beliefs concerning "the Christ" as well as "Jesus Christ".** If you have been diligent to read the other articles on this website then the information and the facts and documentation surely has gotten you attention by now.

This "theological battle" is not easy to grasp, because the weight of such a bitterly defended tradition is very heavy indeed. To free oneself from it, one has to strike at the roots of the problem, i.e. examine first the circumstances that marked the birth of Christianity.

### **3 STRUGGLES THAT GO UNDETECTED: JUDEO -CHRISTIANITY & PAULINE CHRISTIANITY & ROMAN CHRISTIANITY**

As stated above before we can look seriously at the **conflicting genealogies of Jesus and their intended purpose and later addition to the existing First New Testament by the "literalists" of Rome in their refutation of Paul's "Gnostic Christ"** we have to understand the spiritual dynamics that occurred in the first century and the opposing theological camps which fought these "theological wars".

The majority of Christians believe that the Gospels were written by direct witnesses of the life of Jesus and therefore constitute unquestionable evidence concerning the events high-lighting his life and preachings. One wonders, in the presence of such **false guarantees of authenticity**, how it is possible to discuss the teachings derived from them and how one can cast doubt upon the validity of the Church as an institution applying the general instructions supposedly that Jesus himself gave. Today's popular editions of the Gospels contain commentaries aimed at propagating these ideas among the general public.

The value the authors of the Gospels have as eye-witnesses is always presented to the faithful as if such a thought is without question but nothing could be further from the truth. In the middle of the Second century, Saint Justin did, after all, call the Gospels the **'Memoirs of the Apostles'**. There are in addition so many details proclaimed concerning the authors that it is a wonder that one could ever doubt their accuracy. If you read common Christian commentators you will find statements like: "Matthew was a well-known character, 'a customs officer employed at the tollgate or customs house at Capharnaum; it is even said that he spoke Aramaic and Greek. Mark is also easily identifiable as Peter's colleague; there is no doubt that he too was an eye-witness. Luke is the 'dear physician' of whom Paul talks: information on him is very precise. John is the Apostle who was always near to Jesus, son of Zebedee, fisherman on the Sea of Galilee". On the surface of such statement one is led to **assume that such is the case; but that is before any investigation is undertaken to verify the validity of such statements.**

**Modern scholarly studies on the beginnings of Christianity show that this way of presenting things hardly corresponds to reality. As far as the decades following the depiction of Jesus's mission are concerned, it must be understood that events did not at all happen in the way they have been said to have taken place and that Peter's arrival in Rome in no way laid the foundations for the Church. On**

the contrary, from the time of the first century to the second half of the Second century, there was a **struggle between two factions within Judaism**. Later there would be a struggle from a third fraction "outside Judaism" and this Roman faction will be declared the "overall winner" by the fifth century. In the beginning however one was what one might call **Pauline Christianity and the other Judeo-Christianity. It was only very slowly that the Pauline Gnostic Christianity supplanted Judeo-Christianity, and today we see a "modified"& "literalized" Pauline Christianity that has triumphed over Judeo-Christianity via the help of Rome.**

A large number of very recent works are based on contemporary discoveries about Christianity. Among them we find Cardinal Daniélou's name. In December 1967 he published an article in the review *Studies (Etudes)* entitled: *A New Representation of the Origins of Christianity: Judeo-Christianity*. Here he reviews past works, retraces its history and **enables us to place the appearance of the Gospels in quite a different context from the one that emerges on reading accounts intended for mass publication.** What follows is a condensed version of the essential points made in his article, including many quotations from it. **Let me say that in my opinion he has it "almost right" but close enough to get the point so I present excerpts from the article for the reader's benefit.**

*After Jesus's departure, the "little group of Apostles" formed a "Jewish sect that remained faithful to the form of worship practised in the Temple". However, when the observances of converts from paganism were added to them, a 'special system' was offered to them, as it were: the Council of Jerusalem in 49 A.D. exempted them from circumcision and Jewish observances; "many Judeo-Christians rejected this concession". This group was quite separate from Paul's. What is more, Paul and the Judeo-Christians were in conflict over the question of pagans who had turned to Christianity, (the incident of Antioch, 49 A.D. [called in our studies at Bet Emet the Antioch Problem]). The crux of the the problem is that for Paul, circumcision, Sabbath, and form of worship practised in the Temple were henceforth old fashioned, even for the Jews. For Paul Christianity was to free itself from its political-religious adherence to Judaism and open itself to the Gentiles through a synthesis of mystery religions, gnosticism, and a "dab" of Judaism as determined by Paul.*

**For those Judeo-Christians who remained "loyal Jews," Paul was a traitor to them as his message was not a coming human deliverer but rather a "Spiritual Christ" as the salvation for the Gentile world.** Spiritual salvation was not the greatest need for the Jews since they already had the Torah and grew up understanding repentance and obedience to the Commandments of God and their Covenant with him. They needed salvation from the persecution of Rome and only an anointed one from Yahweh like King David of old would do. **Because of a different "salvation message of the convert Paul" Judeo-Christian documents call him an "enemy", accuse him of "tactical double-dealing". Paul, to them, was more concerned with their enemies, the Gentiles, that with the Jews whose religion he had adopted (THINK).** "Until 70 A.D., Judeo-Christianity represents the majority of the Church" and "Paul remains an isolated case". The head of the community at that time was James, supposedly a relation of the historical Jesus. With him were Peter (at the beginning) and John. "James may be considered to represent the Judeo-Christian camp, which deliberately clung to Judaism as opposed to Pauline Christianity." We are taught through tradition that Jesus's family is thought to have had a very important place in the Judeo-Christian Church of Jerusalem. "James's successor was Simeon, son of Cleopas, a cousin of the Lord".

Cardinal Danielou here **quotes Judeo-Christian writings** which express the views on Jesus of this community which initially formed around the apostles:

- **the Gospel of the Hebrews (coming from a Judeo-Christian community in Egypt),**
- **the writings of Clement: Homilies and Recognitions, 'Hypotyposeis',**
- **the Second Apocalypse of James,**
- **the Gospel of Thomas.**

**Answer for yourself:** How often has any of these books that we know the Messianic Jews in Israel in the first



century read and treasured have been read in your Church or studied since they represent the ideas and belief of Messianic Israel in the first century? If Israel is a "light" to the nations (Gentiles) then how much of this "light" has been shown upon you?

**One could note here that all these writings were later to be classed as Apocrypha, i.e. they had to be concealed by the victorious Church which was born of Paul's success.** This Church made obvious excisions in the Gospel literature and while rejecting the many Gnostic Gospels that were available to them that the earliest Gnostic Christians cherished they chose to not only author but present only the four Canonic Gospels which we have today.] *"It is to the Judeo-Christians that one must ascribe the oldest writings of Christian literature."* Sadly we don't have these in our bibles today and did not even know of them thanks to Rome and we are blessed today by the fruits of archeology which has brought these to our attention in our generation. Cardinal Daniélou mentions them in detail.

"It was not just in Jerusalem and Palestine that Judeo-Christianity predominated during the first hundred years of the Church. *The Judeo-Christian mission seems everywhere to have developed before the Pauline mission. This is certainly the explanation of the fact that the letters of Paul allude to a conflict.*" They were the same adversaries he was to meet everywhere: in Galatia, Corinth, Colossae, Rome and Antioch.

The Syro-Palestinian coast from Gaza to Antioch was Judeo-Christian "as witnessed by the Acts of the Apostles and Clementine writings". In Asia Minor, the existence of Judeo-Christians is indicated in Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians. Papias's writings give us information about Judeo-Christianity in Phrygia. In Greece, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians mentions Judeo-Christians, especially at Apollos. According to Clement's letter and the Shepherd of Hermas, Rome was an 'important centre'. For Suetonius and Tacitus, the Christians represented a Jewish sect. Cardinal Daniélou thinks that the first evangelization in Africa was Judeo-Christian. The Gospel of the Hebrews and the writings of Clement of Alexandria link up with this.

**It is essential to know these facts to understand the struggle between communities that formed the background against which the current Gospels that we possess today would later be written.** In a nutshell we have in the beginning a conflict between two theological camps:

- **Messianic-Judaism as expressed by the Jerusalem Church which looked for an "anointed human Messiah" and**
- **Pauline Gnostic Christianity that taught a "non-fleshly Christ-Logos-Joshua/Jesus"**

This theological struggle will be settled by the destruction of the Temple and the Roman war of 70 A.D. Both of these struggling theological camps will lose and Rome will win and although their victory over Judaism and Messianism was immediate it would take them over 5 centuries to defeat the Gnostic believers who followed the Pauline Gnostic Christ.

## **A THIRD THEOLOGICAL VOICE EMERGES AS A SYNTHESIS OF THE PREVIOUS TWO**

**A "third" voice will emerge through Roman military might, censorship and destruction of Gnostic writings as well as the world's libraries (like Alexandria for example) along with creative writing of the "Second New Testament" which will teach a "fleshy human Christ" which Paul and his 7 authentic epistles never taught and this is "the Christ" that we have received today in the book the Rome forged and gave the world in the wake of their domination of the world in that day.** Such a forgery goes unnoticed except by those who submit to serious study of the New Testament and the various roads and tributaries that emerge for further study from such investigation. **Missing from our libraries and our hands as archeology and serious study will attest is the "First New Testament" of the earliest "Gnostic**

**Christians" where Paul's 7 letters were the core of Marcion's collection of Epistles of Paul plus Marcion's "Gospel" which is basically an early written record of the "Q" oral sources and traditions attributed to the "Jesus Christ" of Christian Gnosticism.**

**Answer for yourself:** Was this "Jesus Christ" a human being as first taught by the earliest Gnostic Christians? No but more on that later as our studies get more involved.

Messianic-Judaism will lose and by default a later "Roman" modified Pauline Christianity will win. **The only problem is that this "modified Roman Pauline Christianity" is not the same that Paul taught and few ever see this although the contradictions by Paul in the New Testament should alter us to the fact that something is wrong.** That is where I was for years until my studies finally encompassed a through understanding of Gnosticism; in particular Christian Gnosticism which was the faith not of Messianic Judaism but the evolution of the Essenes which had long departed from normative conservative Judaism. Later forgery of the rest of the Epistles bearing Paul's name were crafted by Irenaeus and other proto-Roman forgers in order to present an anti-Gnostic slant to what was taught by the earliest Gnostic Christians who taught a "Spiritual non-human Christ".....the Logos....the "Christ within".

***Now don't believe this because I said it but do you own study to see if this is possibly true and if you do you will see that these truth exist and Rome never wanted you to know! Take the challenge and I will lead you through the wilderness of lies and deceptions if you wish.***

It is time that we restore the real truths and revelation given by God to the Ancients who have us the religious concepts that we have today which sadly are so blurred by deceit that we miss the beauty and simplicity of what God intended we, as His creation, was to understand about Him and His creation. We have to start over and that means with Egypt where we find the earliest Revelations of God to mankind in all their beauty and simplicity. The Egypt website is soon to be published on the net so please pray for me as I finish this part of the puzzle that has consumed me for the last 16 years.

**But what we cannot miss here is that the form of Pauline Christianity that existed in the first century is completely different from the revised and modified Pauline Christianity that will emerge from Rome after they "literalize" Paul's Gnostic Christ and create many religious writings in both Paul's name as well as the apostle's names (the Gospels) in order to make it appear as if a "literalized" Christ was the crux of Paul's message when scholarly study today reveals just the opposite!!! [READ THAT AGAIN]. The forged texts that we have today, after many adaptations from the sources, began to appear in their infancy around after 70 A.D., the time when the two rival communities were engaged in a fierce struggle, with the Messianic-Jews (also termed Judeo-Christians since they believed in a soon coming human messiah as fulfillment of Hebrew Scriptures) still retaining the upper hand. With the Jewish war and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the situation was to be reversed. This is how Cardinal Daniélou explains the decline:**

*"After the Jews had been discredited in the Empire, the Christians tended to detach themselves from them. The Hellenistic peoples of Christian persuasion then gained the upper hand. Paul won a posthumous victory. Christianity separated itself politically and sociologically from Judaism; it became the third people (a third voice after Rome refutes the Gnostic Christ of Paul and turns the allegory of Paul into a "literal Christ Jesus" made of flesh and blood and "fills in the gaps" by creating genealogies, birth accounts, infancy narratives, and a historical time line for the "human Jesus").*

**Answer for yourself:** How do we know this is true for sure?

Well all you have to do is look at archeology and what has been discovered in the last 200 years and do critical



study into comparative religions and see how most of the "Jesus stories" in the New Testament are carbon copies of prior allegorized legends of sungods and dying-rising sungodmen and various other legends like that of Osiris which became the "pattern" for all other later sungodmen. The Jesus of Rome's creation in their Second New Testament is a replay of what has been told before as found in the spiritual allegories of Gentile nations since time began. **However there is one big difference. Where all prior allegories of sungods and sungodmen were but that; allegories expressing Divine concepts told through the story of symbolic allegories and metaphors where the dying-rising godmen were but pictures of the awakening of the soul within mankind to his true Spiritual Nature (that God dwells within him and that he has come from God and returns to God) Rome will "literalize" the story of these godmen and role them all into one; that being the ultimate liberalized Godman as Jesus of their Gospels (since their Emperors were already human gods alive and walking around like other humans it was no problem to have another).** This Divine allegory of the God within expressed since Egypt all the way down through history becomes now in Rome's refutation of the earlier Gnostic Christ and the Gnostic First New Testament a "Literalized Christ".

*Col 1:26-27 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory:** (KJV)*

**Through creative forgery in Paul's name Roman theology will find expression and the truth behind all the Ancient allegories of God and "the Christ" that lives within mankind are lost to us and in its place falsehood and idolatry is taught and presented to the world as a "Second New Testament" which teaches a "literalized Godman" who is to be worshipped. This never existed! Just ask the Jews and their scholars who just happen to have the uncorrupted Hebrew Scriptures which attest to this truth!** Let it be understood by all that although this ultimate forgery of the Gnostic New Testament by Rome was to come later after the Jewish revolt in 140 A.D., Judeo-Christianity continued to predominate culturally. **It will be this "Hellenistic-Pro-Roman" influence that will become the anti-Gnostic yet "modified" and "literalized" pro-Pauline faction which will step in and amend so much of the earlier Gnostic New Testament of Marcion and the Gnostic Pauline epistles and produce a refutation anti-Gnostic New Testament.** In so doing we find that under this influence of this **3rd group of proto-Catholics like Irenaeus and others. The 4 Gospels will be crafted along with these conflicting genealogies, birth narratives, infancy narratives, etc., and also the other fraudulent Pauline epistles which try to give an anti-Gnostic slant to an already existing Gnostic New Testament by presenting after 180 C.E./A.D. a "human fleshly Christ".** This 3rd group succeeds via the power of Rome and gives the world the Second New Testament we have in our possession today. **So we go literally from a Judeo-Messianism expecting a political human Messiah (Judeo-Christianity [camp one] to a pro-Pauline "Gnostic Christ" [camp two] which stressed not the political aspects of God's deliverance (Yahweh's salvation=the meaning behind the Hebrew "Joshua" or Latin "Jesus") as had the Jews but to a spiritual deliverance within the soul [which happens to be also a correct understanding of the work of the Logos/Christ/Sophia on spiritual level] to a 3rd group of "literalistic" anti-Gnostic proto-Catholics which reworked not only existing theologies that emanated out of Judaism but was responsible for stealing the identities of the earliest "apostles" and Paul and ascribing such authority to their "literalistic" anti-Gnostic religious synthesis of sun worship and parts of Judaism which is of their own making and solidifying this in a refutation Second New Testament which went all over the world and continues to do so today.**

From sometime around or after 70 A.D. to a period sometime before 180 A.D. the Gospels of Mark, Matthew,

Luke and John were slowly produced. However they do not constitute the first written Christian documents: the authentic 7 letters (Gnostic epistles) of Paul date from well before them. The Jews had their Tanakh and the "Gnostic Christians" of Paul had his Gnostic 7 Epistles but curiously absent at this time was Rome's New Testament which will later teach a "human Christ" which Paul's Epistles never taught!

According to O. Culmann, Paul probably wrote his letter to the Thessalonians in 50 A.D. He had probably disappeared several years prior to the completion of Mark's Gospel.

## "PAUL A TRAITOR"...LET US UNDERSTAND HOW THIS HAPPENED

Paul is the most controversial figure in Christianity. According to existing historical records left to us by the Ebionites and others Paul was considered to be a traitor to Jewish Messianic thought by the Messianic community who had stayed in Jerusalem in the circle around James. Paul and his Gnostic Christ laid the foundation for a later Roman Christianity as they would come behind him and "literalize" Paul's Gnostic Spiritual Christ...the Logos within. Paul had not known Jesus during his lifetime and we are led to believe that this "Jesus" appeared to him which was necessary if he was ever to prove the legitimacy of his mission. This had to be done by declaring that Jesus, raised from the dead, had appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

**Answer for yourself:** When did this "appearance" happen? Can we date it for sure and what implications can be drawn from such dating? How is it that this appearance of "the resurrected Christ" to Paul can be dated to 27 A.D. yet Jesus is not supposed to have died according to Christian theology till after 30 A.D.? Did you catch that?

**Answer for yourself:** Have you put on your thinking hats yet? You may need one for the following example. The conversion of Paul, according to the Acts, is supposed to have occurred sometime after the year 30 A.D. at the earliest; and yet if we accept the data furnished by the book of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he must have been converted as early as the year 27 A.D. Paul states that after his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem for three years. Then after 14 more years he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This second visit can be dated by means of the famine, which is historic, and known to have occurred in the year 44, at which time relief was conveyed to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Paul. If we take 17 years from 44, the different statements go to show that Paul had been converted as early as the year 27. Thus, according to the dates and the data derived from the Acts, from Paul's epistle, and the historic fact of the famine, Paul was converted to Christianity in the year 27 of our era!

**Answer for yourself:** What was Paul supposedly converted to then if Jesus was not dead yet in the year 27 A.D./C.E.? Why did not Paul go up to Jerusalem and hold a conversation with Jesus personally since by all Christian scholarly accounts he is yet alive at this time? What does this whole deception teach us or should teach us?

Well first of all that what we are reading in our New Testaments given to us by Rome might not be true and we have to dig out the truth from other sources available to us today. This could not have been by a spiritual manifestation of the supposed personal Jesus to Paul, who was not then dead, and had not at that time been re-begotten as the Christ of the canonical history. This is usually looked upon (by Renan, for example,) as such an absurdity that no credence can be allowed to the account in the Acts. Such a supposed conversion by its own account is dubious if not an impossibility; whether you look at Galatians and the conversion account which evidently is forged as well or the book of Acts and its conversion account.

**Answer for yourself:** What should this teach us? This betrays the action of textual forgers trying to write into history and the texts grounds and support for their religious beliefs long after Paul is dead. Since Paul was the



only successful "missionary" to the Gentiles they will need Paul as their "ambassador" for a "literalized Christ". There is only one problem; Paul never taught one in his 7 authentic Epistles. **Study reveals Paul was a Gnostic and not an advocate in the Historical Jesus of Rome's invention.** You cannot date one event by another which never occurred, or, if it did occur, is not recorded by Paul, especially when his own account offers negative evidence of its non-occurrence. It is only using plain words justifiably to say that the conjecturers of the Acts falsify whenever it is convenient, and tell the truth when they cannot help it!

It is quite reasonable to ask what Christianity might have been without Paul and one could no doubt construct all sorts of hypotheses on this subject. I would guess we would have been left with Messianic Judaism. **As far as the Gospels are concerned however, it is almost certain that if this atmosphere of struggle between communities had not existed, we would not have had the writings we possess today since these religious camps waged theological battles not only with rhetoric but the "pen" as well. We have Paul's writings which are Gnostic in his 7 authentic epistles. These writings begin to appear at a time of fierce struggle between the two communities (Messianic Judaism and Gnostic Christianity).** These 'combat writings', as Father Kannengiesser calls them, emerged from the multitude of writings on the "Jesus". It will do the reader well to read and study on the **"Exodus Allegory"** and just what "Jesus" meant in the first century taking into play the word usages and how the earliest New Testament writings characterized "Jesus" and "Jesus Christ" in an allegorical sense in order to fully understand what is being said. Only later mind you we find the "literalization" of Jesus by Rome when they forged much of the New Testament which we have today and gave "flesh" to "the Christ" through falsified Gospels and Pauline epistles and other letters we have in our New Testaments today. **These "theological battles" occurred at the time when Paul's style of Christianity won through default and the Roman war which suppressed Messianic Judaism along with their Messianic influence. In the wake of this war we find the emergence of a "theological Rome" whereby they will take existing religious thought and synthesize them with their own and present them in their own collection of official texts in 180 A.D. which will refute complete the earlier Tanakh as well as the Gnostic First Gnostic New Testament of 140 A.D. given to us by Marcion. This Roman synthesis of texts that included everything from pure invention to purposeful mistranslation and misquotation would become the foundation for a later official modified "Canon" of a Second New Testament by Rome which condemned and excluded as unorthodox any other documents that were not suited to the line adopted by the later Gentile pro-Pauline "modified & literalized" Church.**

The Messianic Judeo-Christians have now disappeared as a community with any influence, but one still hears people talking about them under the general term of "Judaistic". This is how Cardinal Daniélou describes their disappearance:

*"When they were cut off -from the Great Church, that gradually freed itself from its Jewish attachments, they petered out very quickly in the West. In the East however it is possible to find traces of them in the **Third and Fourth Centuries A.D.**, especially in Palestine, Arabia, Transjordan, Syria and Mesopotamia. Others joined in the orthodoxy of the Great Church, at the same time preserving traces of Semitic culture; some of these still persist in the Churches of Ethiopia and Chaldea".* A more detailed understanding of Paul's Gnostic influence and the struggle with Messianic Judaism is available to the reader is so interested.

## THE FOUR GOSPELS....HISTORY AND SOURCES

It is important that the reader pay close attention to what is being said next. **In the writings that come from the early stages of Christianity, the Gospels are not mentioned until long after the works of Paul. It was not until the middle of the Second century A.D., after 140 A.D. to be precise, that accounts began to appear concerning a collection of Evangelistic writings.** In spite of this, "from the beginning of the Second century A.D., many Christian authors clearly intimate that they knew a great many of Paul's letters." These observations are set out in the Introduction to the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament* edited 1972. They are worth mentioning from the outset, and it is useful to point out



here that the work referred to is the result of a collective effort which brought together more than one hundred Catholic and Protestant specialists.

The Gospels, later to become official, i.e. canonic, did not become known until fairly late, even though they were being compiled at the beginning of the Second century A.D. According to the Ecumenical Translation, stories belonging to them began to be quoted "orally" around the middle of the Second century A.D. Nevertheless, "it is nearly always difficult to decide whether the quotations come from written texts that the authors had next to them or if the latter were content to evoke the memory of fragments of the oral tradition" (THINK)!

*"Before 140 A.D."* we read in the commentaries of various Bibles, *"there was, in any case, no account by which one might have recognized a collection of evangelistic writings"*. Yet in spite of such clear historical evidence we find Christians who make such statements as those like A. Tricot who writes (1960) in the commentary to his translation of the New Testament: "Very early on, from the beginning of the Second century A.D., it became a habit to say 'Gospel' meaning the books that Saint Justin around 150 A.D. had also called 'The Memoirs of the Apostles'." That simply is not true and is sadly an erroneous assumption that cannot be substantiated by the evidences existing today which proves the otherwise; namely, that the first quote by any Christian writer from the 4 Gospels by "name" is after 180 A.D (last second century). Unfortunately, erroneous assertions of this kind are sufficiently common for the public to have ideas on the early date of the Gospels which are mistaken. So that we don't forget why this information is important is because we will find upon close scholarly study that another proto-Catholic "literalistic" Second New Testament will surface in and around 180 A.D. with the help first of all by Irenaeus which will refute and eventually replace an earlier "First Gnostic New Testament" and in so doing bring into reality not only these 4 Gospels but many epistles as well which were penned in the names of Paul and other "apostles" which will completely distort the earliest understandings of "the Christ" as well as "Jesus Christ" as held by the earliest Gnostic Christians.

The Gospels did not form a complete whole 'very early on'; it did not happen until more than a century after the end of Jesus's mission. The Ecumenical Translation of the Bible estimates the date the four Gospels acquired the status of canonic literature at around 170 A.D.

Justin's statement which calls the authors 'Apostles' is not acceptable either, as we shall see.

As far as the date the Gospels were written is concerned, A. Tricot erroneously states that Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels were written before 70 A.D.: but this is not acceptable, except perhaps for Mark. Let us never forget that the first quote of a Gospel by name by any Christian writer is not found until after the Second New Testament of 180 A.D. Following many others, this commentator goes out of his way to present the authors of the Gospels as the apostles or the companions of Jesus. For this reason he suggests dates of writing that place them very near to the time Jesus lived. As for John, whom A. Tricot has us believe lived until roughly 100 A.D., Christians have always been used to seeing him depicted as being very near to Jesus on ceremonial occasions. It is very difficult however to assert that he is the author of the Gospel that bears his name. For A. Tricot, as for other commentators, the Apostle John (like Matthew) was the officially qualified witness of the facts he recounts, although the majority of critics do not support the hypothesis which says he wrote the fourth Gospel.

**Answer for yourself:** If however the four Gospels in question cannot reasonably be regarded as the 'Memoirs' of the apostles or companions of Jesus, where do they come from?

Culmann, in his book The New Testament [Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1967], says of this that the evangelists were only the "spokesmen of the early Christian community which wrote down the oral tradition. For thirty or forty years, the Gospel had existed as an almost exclusively



**oral tradition: the latter only transmitted sayings and isolated narratives.** These writers, called "evangelists" by church tradition, strung them together, each in his own way according to his own character and theological preoccupations. **They linked up the narrations and sayings handed down by the prevailing tradition. The grouping of Jesus's sayings and likewise the sequence of narratives is made by the use of fairly vague linking phrases such as 'after this', 'when he had' etc. In other words, the 'framework' of the Synoptic Gospels [The three Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.] is of a purely literary order and is not based on history."**

The same author continues as follows:

*"It must be noted that the needs of preaching, worship and teaching, more than biographical considerations, were what guided the early community when it wrote down the tradition of the life of Jesus. The apostles illustrated the truth of the faith they were preaching by describing the events in the life of Jesus. Their sermons are what caused the descriptions to be written down. The sayings of Jesus were transmitted, in particular, in the teaching of the catechism of the early Church."*

This is exactly how the commentators of the describe the writing of the Gospels: *the formation of an oral tradition influenced by the preachings of Jesus's disciples and other preachers; the preservation by preaching of this material, which is in actual fact reproduced and found in the Gospels, by preaching, liturgy, and teaching of the faithful; the slender possibility of a concrete form given by writings to certain confessions of faith, sayings attributed to Jesus from oral traditions, descriptions of the Passion for example; the fact that the writers of the New Testament called "evangelists" resort to various written forms as well as data contained in the oral tradition. They resort to these various oral traditions in order to produce texts which "are suitable for various circles, which meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition"*.

**This position has been collectively adopted by more than one hundred experts in the exegesis of the New Testament, both Catholic and Protestant.** It diverges widely from the line established by the Second Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution on the Revelation drawn up between 1962 and 1965 let alone received church tradition since the early third century. On the contrary, as we read in the following taken from the Second Vatican Council concerning their views upon the New Testament which demonstrate the "party line":

*"Nobody can overlook the fact that, among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a well-deserved position of superiority. This is by virtue of the fact that they represent the most pre-eminent witness to the life and teachings of the Incarnate Word, Our Saviour. At all times and in all places the Church has maintained and still maintains the apostolic origin of the four Gospels. What the apostles actually preached on Christ's orders, both they and the men in their following subsequently transmitted, with the divine inspiration of the Spirit, in writings which are the foundation of the faith, i.e. the fourfold Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."*

*"Our Holy Mother, the Church, has firmly maintained and still maintains with the greatest constancy, that these four Gospels, which it unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus, Son Of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation until the day when He was taken up into the heavens. . . . The sacred authors therefore composed the four Gospels in such a way as to always give us true and frank information on the life of Jesus"*.

This is an unambiguous affirmation of the fidelity with which the Gospels transmit the acts and sayings of Jesus.

There is hardly any compatibility between the Council's affirmation and what the authors and scholars quoted above claim. In particular the following:

*The Gospels "are not to be taken literally" they are "writings suited to an occasion" or "combat writings". Their authors "are writing down the traditions of their own community concerning Jesus". (Father Kannengiesser).*

More to the truth consider the next statement.

*The Gospels are texts which "are suitable for various circles, meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus, the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition". (Ecumenical Translation of the Bible).*

## SOMEBODY HAD GOT IT WRONG....BUT WHOM?

It is quite clear that we are here faced with contradictory statements: the declaration of the Council on the one hand, and more recently adopted attitudes on the other. According to the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, a faithful account of the actions and words of Jesus is to be found in the Gospels; but it is impossible to reconcile this with the existence in the New Testament text of:

- contradictions in the New Testament texts that are exposed by knowledge of geography, history, Biblical languages, mistranslations & misquotations & pure invention of New Testament Scriptures when compared with the Hebrew Scriptures...thus creating a false picture of the Jewish Messiah, "the Christ" as well as "Jesus Christ" as understood by the earliest Christians
- the recurrent pattern of the cosmic-godman taken from personified sunworship as found applied to the Jewish Messiah by the synthesis of religious ideas by the apostate Essenes of the intertestamental times which find expression in their fraudulent translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek which we find constitute the very basis for all quotes of Hebrew Scriptures in the New Testament
- the recurring pattern of Osiris-Dionysius and the events in their lives replayed not only down through history through the myths and legends of cosmic godmen in other nations as expressed through allegory which finds ultimate expression in the New Testament as "literalized events" in the life of a Jewish Rabbi named Yeshua/Jesus
- other improbabilities & things which are materially impossible or statements which run contrary to firmly established reality & I could go on.

If, on the other hand, one chooses to regard the Gospels as expressing the personal point of view of those who collected the oral traditions that belonged to various communities, or as writings suited to an occasion or "combat-writings" expressing the current religious views of various theological camps, it does not come as a surprise to find faults in the Gospels (like the genealogies of Jesus). All these faults are the sign that they were written by men in circumstances such as these. The writers may have been quite sincere, even though they relate facts without doubting their inaccuracy. They provide us with descriptions which contradict other authors' narrations or other Ancient understandings of "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ" as held by the earliest Christian Gnostics for example, or are influenced by reasons of religious rivalry between competing religious communities. They therefore present stories about the life of Jesus from a completely different angle than their adversaries which today are easy to substantiate by reading a few good books.

In closing let me give it to you in a nutshell. I have tried in this opening article to paint with broad strokes the



events that underlie the foundation for the writings that become the New Testament which we have today. We have a struggle and contest of religious ideas from three camps that compete for ascendancy:

- **James and the Jerusalem Church & Messianic Judaism** which taught and looked for a human descendant of King David anointed for the task of a physical deliverance and salvation of Israel from the persecutions of the Gentiles and restoration to the past glories of the ear of King David
- **Marcion and Paul and Gnostic Christianity** which taught an allegorical "Christ within" and taught of a spiritual awaking and salvation within mankind through the coming to the awareness of the God within, man's true origin and his destiny, and the attendant responsibilities that such an awareness brings to man who is created in the image of God.
- **Roman literalistic Christianity** who not only wins the wars against the Jews and Gnostics but builds upon both their beliefs the ultimate religious synthesis whereby the expected human messiah is fused with the personified cosmic godman of sunworship and presented as a "literalized" man and "fleshly Christ" in a historical timeline of their making through their forgery of many religious "gospels" and "epistles" in names of Paul and other historical apostles from the Jerusalem Church. In so doing they literally back-wrote a "literalized" Christ as "Joshua-Jesus-Christ" and literalized the myths of Osiris-Dionysius and these became the stories and events of "the human Christ" we have in the New Testament. Lastly their continued forgery in Paul's name was to give the impression that Paul always believed and taught a fleshly Christ when in fact he did not.

The sad result of this deception is that we approach the New Testament today never knowing that three different theologies [human Messiah, allegory of the Christ within, and a literalized Christ as if human] were thrown into the blender of Rome and out comes a "golden calf". And we read the New Testament with such an unawareness of this fact that we never distinguish between them let alone know which of the three can be believed as true. Let me give you a hint from my perspective from scholarly study over these last 16 yrs; namely, two are correct but one is idolatry. Any guess? Surely Judaism looked for their hoped for and prophesied Messiah who was to be only an anointed man from the human lineage of David. This was not what Paul, himself a Gentile who had converted to Judaism, was concerned. You heard me correctly; historical records and the testimony of Church Fathers tell us that Paul was a convert to Judaism. No wonder he has Roman citizenship (THINK). Paul's revelation was not of a human Messiah but rather of the same one that had been held since the time of the Ancients which concerned the true nature of mankind. The Logos or "the Christ" dwelt within each of God's creations and over time this was truth was lost. Egypt knew it and taught it and at one time the Gentile nations had such an understanding and expressed this through metaphors and allegories of the dying-rising godman as the souls' awakening to the Divine within mankind. This was understood by the Ancients as a resurrection for the dead while alive! Paul understood it and taught it and it is right before our eyes and we never really understand it!

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

Paul is writing and speaking to a living audience here. This is just another proof that Paul was Gnostic and we never knew it. We fail to understand these things as typical Christians today because simply we were never taught this but the information is out there and in time you stumble onto this if you keep studying. Paul was teaching a "Spiritual Christ" within each of us and not a Jewish Messiah. This "Spiritual Christ-Logos-Sophia" is the mediator between Spirit and matter. After Rome gets through with his writings then Paul is made to contradict what he earlier has taught and wrote he is made to appear that he is teaching a historical Jesus Christ when he never did. We are so indebted to archeology and men and women who dedicated their lives to literally dig up these truth hidden from us and bring them to the light of day in these last two hundred years. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library just barely over 50 years ago the lie of Roman Christianity has been exposed; that is only to those who take the

**time to look.**

**Now let us continue our study in the next article in this series.**





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## WAS PAUL A GNOSTIC? #1

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Gnostics since the first century claim the Apostle Paul as their great Pneumatic teacher?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Gnostics since the first century claim they are following Paul's example when they offer "secret teaching" of wisdom and Gnosis to their initiates?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Gnostics since the first century claim Paul's resurrection theology as the source for their own, citing his words as decisive evidence *against* the ecclesiastical doctrine of bodily resurrection? Did you catch that?

**Answer for yourself:** How can these things be?

When you and I pick up our New Testaments today and begin to read the Pauline epistles we surely get a different picture than what these ancient historical records attest.

**Answer for yourself:** Has something been changed to alter the earliest understanding of the historical Paul and his teachings from the first century? **Yes...it has.** The New Testament today is really the "Second New Testament" given to us by Rome and not the earlier "First New Testament" given to us by the earliest Christian Gnostics like Marcion and Paul which held these earliest of Pauline beliefs.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just possible that much of what passes for the current "historical" interpretation of Paul and for "objective" analysis of his letters can be traced not to the religious beliefs of the earliest first century Christians but to the second-century heresiologists like Justin and Irenaeus? **It sure can!**

**Answer for yourself:** If the apostle Paul was so unequivocally anti-Gnostic as he is made to look in our "Second New Testament" then how in the world could these earliest Gnostic Christians claim him as their great Pneumatic teacher?

***Something is not right!!!***

**Without a doubt St. Paul is the most influential Christian of all time.** There are 13 letters attributed to him in the New Testament, making up a quarter of the whole of canonical Christian scripture. On top of that, most of the Acts of the Apostles is devoted to tales of Paul.

**Answer for yourself:** But what is the truth about this Paul since seeing that the historical record disagrees as not only to whom he was but what he taught as well? Who is Paul?

As a typical Christian you have grown up like myself being taught that Paul is the image of orthodoxy and a that he believed in a human Christ Jesus. This means simply that he could not be a Gnostic but really anti-Gnostic in his theology. **If you have been faithful to read the articles on this website up to now then this inherited Roman picture of Paul has been brought into serious doubt if not exposed as a lie!** Yet it is a

remarkable fact that the Gnostics themselves never saw Paul in this light as we have been taught.

**Answer for yourself:** Why not? Simply because we are speaking about a time that preceded the later Roman forgery mill whereby Rome completely re-worked the First New Testament of Marcion and altered the allegorical understanding of "the Christ" and made this Spiritual Concept and Dynamic into a "human being" by forging the Pastoral Epistles in Paul's name. The rest is history.

Archeology and the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and coptic Gnostic Gospels have revealed to us that the early Christians held just the opposite beliefs about "the Christ" than we have inherited and been taught today. Only in the last fifty years have such archeological discoveries shown us that the great Gnostic sages of the early second century CE called Paul "the Great Apostle" and honored him as the primary inspiration for Gnostic Christianity (Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1979, p. 2).

**Answer for yourself:** How can the early Gnostic Christians who did not believe in a "human Christ" but an "allegorical Christ" claim Paul as their "Apostle" and the later Roman anti-Gnostic Church who taught a human "Christ Jesus" claim Paul as their "Apostle"? The answer is found in the authenticity of the texts of the New Testament; by that I mean the early authentic Pauline texts before they were later altered, changed, and invented by the later anti-Gnostics like Irenaeus and his production of the "Second New Testament" which contains a "different Pauline theology" than expressed in Marcion's Gnostic New Testament of 140 C.E.

Further proof that Paul was an advocate of Gnosticism is found in Valentinus where he explains that Paul initiated the chosen few into the "Deeper Mysteries" of Christianity, which revealed a secret doctrine of God. These initiates had included Valentinus' teacher Theudas, who had in turn initiated Valentinus himself (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, 1979, p. 62). Clement, *Stromata* 7.17, records the Gnostic claim that Theudas had received secret teachings from Paul-the "Deeper Mysteries" that Paul reserved from his public teaching and taught only to a few disciples in secret.

Many Gnostic groups claimed Paul as their founding father and Gnostics calling themselves "Paulicians" continued to flourish, despite persistent persecution from the Roman Church, until the end of the tenth century. W. Kingsland, in The Gnosis, 1937, on page 35 shares with us that Paul wrote his letters to churches in seven cities, which are known to have been centers of Gnostic Christianity during the second century.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware of what these seven cities that received Paul's letters had in common? These Christian communities were led by the Gnostic sage Marcion, for whom Paul was the only true apostle. (B. M. Metzger, The Canon of the New Testament, 1987, p. 90ff). Let the reader understand that we live in an age of advanced Biblical studies. That being a fact modern research has been carried out on the earliest collections of Paul's letters, which all contain prologues. Seven of these prologues are so similar as to suggest a common origin, and as they hold Paul to be the "true apostle" and are strongly anti-Jewish, they are now considered to be the work of Marcionites. These seven prologues are attached to the same Pauline letters that are also now accepted as genuine and the churches to which these are addressed are known to have been Marcionite strongholds in the middle of the second century. All of this suggests that Marcion, as he claimed, was indeed the true heir of Paul. By the time Paul's letters had swelled to 13, other prologues needed writing. These "clumsy works" have been dated to the fourth and fifth centuries. One thing is for sure: if Paul really were as anti-Gnostic as the Literalists claim, then it is astounding how many Gnostic texts quote him or are actually attributed to him. The followers of Marcion even had a gospel, which they claimed was written by Paul (S. Hollroyd, Gnosticism, 1994, p. 39).

**Answer for yourself:** Is there any evidence in the archeological finds at Nag Hammadi that lend credence to Paul being a Gnostic? Yes there is! The Nag Hammadi library includes many writings that incorporate the



name of Paul:

- ***The Prayer of the Apostle Paul***
- ***The Apocalypse of Paul*** (J. M. Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library, 1978, p. 256). *The Apocalypse of Paul* gives the apostle's visions in 10 heavens - a lower seven and a supernal three - not just the third that he describes in Corinthians.
- Another text, ***The Hypostasis of the Archons***, calls Paul "the Great Apostle" and explains his teaching in Colossians 1:13 on the "authorities of darkness," (J. M. Robinson, op. cit., p. 163). These, the text explains, are the planets and stars that control fate and destiny-just as they are for Paul.
- A scripture called ***The Ascent of Paul*** records the "ineffable words, which it is not permissible for a man to speak," which Paul heard during his famous ascent to the third heaven alluded to by the apostle in his Letter to the Corinthians.
- Another text, called ***The Acts of Paul***, describes Paul traveling with a companion called Thecla - a woman who conducted baptisms! (W. Barnstone, The Other Bible, 1984, p. 652).

**Answer for yourself:** Now that we have seen proof positive that the earliest Christian Gnostics regarded Paul as "their Apostle" from the many Gnostic writings that have his name then is the picture becoming a little more clear that the earliest Christians regarded Paul a Gnostic like themselves and pointed to his writings for an expression of their brand of Gnostic Christianity?

## THE REAL PAUL...CAN HE BE FOUND?

So far we have seen conflicting depictions of the Apostle Paul. We have seen him from the view of the early Christian Gnostics who claim him as one of their own and one who taught an "allegorical Christ" as the mediator between the Spirit and matter. Then we have likewise seen him from the Orthodox Roman viewpoint of the "literalists" who paint him as anti-Gnostic and a supporter of a "human Christ Jesus."

**Answer for yourself:** Will the real Apostle Paul please stand up?

**Answer for yourself:** Could Paul have been a Gnostic, as the Gnostics claimed?

As we have already seen, modern scholars now regard many of the letters attributed to Paul as forgeries (G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 198-9). **Ludemann calls these fakes "foolhardy," as they only succeeded in putting "a spotlight on the struggles" between the Gnostics and the orthodox Church to claim the powerful figure of Paul.** Ludemann brings to our attention that the author of 2 Thessalonians, in a pitiful attempt to suggest authenticity, writes, ***"Greetings to you in my own handwriting, which is a mark of all my letters: this is what my writing looks like."*** This is one of the numerous addenda to Paul's letters **made by scribes**, usually to issue threats against dissenters. Again let us remember that scholars today are almost unanimous that this epistle is a complete forgery by the anti-Gnostic literalists. We see the same thing in 1 Corinthians 16:21-4, where the writer reassures the reader ***"This greeting is in my own hand-Paul."*** The most ridiculous of these is in Galatians 6:11-18, where a scribe launches out into a polemic against the Jews but introduces it with Paul's supposed words: ***"Look how big the letters are, now that I am writing to you in my own hand."*** **Of the 13 New Testament letters, only seven are now accepted as largely authentic.** (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 61). Regarding the Pauline letters, Ludemann writes, **"Scholars generally agree that of the thirteen extant letters, seven are authentic (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon), whereas the rest have been composed by later disciples in the apostle's name."** G. A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist, 1975, on page 17 refers to Schmithal's evidence that all the principal Pauline letters, apart from Galatians, are likewise composite. **In the early Church, opponents of Paul were not averse to tampering with his letters. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian, for example, quote from Galatians but omit the word not in a key passage, thus turning Paul's meaning from the negative into the positive** (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 104).

**As already mentioned, the so-called "Pastoral" letters to Timothy and Titus are universally regarded as fakes. Computer studies have confirmed that the author of the Pastorals is definitely not the author of the letters to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians, which are accepted as genuinely by Paul. (I. Wilson, Jesus: The Evidence, 1984, p. 154). Computer tests have confirmed the suspicions long held by theological scholars that whoever wrote Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, it wasn't Paul (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 288).**

**Answer for yourself:** What should we know about the Pastoral Epistles? These are anti-Gnostic religious documents. That being said then understand that the earliest Christians as we have shown are Gnostic and the First New Testament of Marcion is Gnostic in teaching a non-human allegorical Christ. **Now be aware that the earliest collection of letters attributed to Paul by Marcion in 140 C.E. does not contain the Pastorals** (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 5). Valentinian Gnostics cite only Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, and Hebrews. **This list corresponds exactly to the earliest known Pauline collection attested from Alexandria. In fact, we do not even hear of the Pastorals at all until Irenaeus (c. 190). They appear as a part of the Christian canon only after this time, always as a set, and are regularly dismissed by Christians of all persuasions as forgeries.** (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 135). **Even the great orthodox propagandist Eusebius does not include them in his Bible (c. 325).** B. M. Metzger, in The Canon of the New Testament, 1987, on page 202, says of Eusebius' attempt to delineate an accepted canon: "The most that Eusebius can register is *uncertainty so great that he seems to get confused when making a statement about it.*" Nonetheless he admits that the authenticity of the epistles of James and Jude is doubted (Eusebius, History of the Church, 1965, p. 61). 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John can be likewise grouped as "doubted". Revelation he regards as spurious. After picking our way through his well-guarded statements we end up with a canon of the four gospels, **Paul's epistles minus the Pastorals**, and 1 Peter and 1 John.

**Answer for yourself:** What should this say to us? **Simply that these anti-Gnostic epistles that show up after Irenaeus in 180 C.E. are not authentic Pauline writings but forgeries intended to present Paul as opposed to Gnosticism instead of advocating Gnosticism. This is important, as it is only in the Pastorals that Paul is anti-Gnostic. Pagels notes that Irenaeus strikingly opens his treatise Against Heresies, claiming "the apostle's authority to oppose the Gnostics by citing both Timothy and Titus" (Pagels, op. cit., p. 5).**

**Answer for yourself:** We now know that the Pastoral epistles are forgeries not written by Paul. Why is that? **Only in the Pastorals do we find Pauline literature that is anti-Gnostic.**

Irenaeus also records Tertullian's defensiveness on the issue and regards it as instructive. **He notes that the heretics have dared to impugn the validity of the Pastorals, but insists that the "same Paul" who wrote Galatians also wrote Titus.**

Unlike the genuine Pauline letters, the Pastorals present Paul as an organizer of the Church, a mainstay of Church discipline, and the unswerving antagonist of all heretics (Pagels, op. cit., p. 163). **The Pastorals received their name because of their major concern with how the Church is to be organized.** As Pagels notes, the authentic letters like "Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews, on the other hand virtually ignore Paul's role as an organizer of ecclesiastical congregations." **Paul is made to condemn Gnostic myths as "unhallowed old wives' tales" (I Tim. 4:7) and to recommend his followers "not to meddle with the teachings and not to waste time on endless mythologies and genealogies, which lead to empty speculations" (I. Tim. 1:3-4). Obviously by the end of the second century the view of Paul as a Gnostic teacher was a sufficient threat to motivate someone to create an indisputably Literalist Paul in response.**

**This Paul is made to specifically advise:**



*1 Tim 6:20 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (KJV)*

He is also made to be authoritarian in enforcing the power of the Church hierarchy, writing, 1 Tim 5:20 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. (KJV).

*2 Tim 2:17-18 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. (KJV).*

Paul is made to attack "Hymenaeus and Philetus," two Gnostic teachers like himself who have "wandered afield from the truth" and are teaching the Gnostic doctrine that "our resurrection has already occurred"; **although in his genuine letters Paul claims to be already "resurrected" himself!** And despite the fact that there was a widespread tradition that Paul traveled with a woman who baptized (W. Barnstone, The Other Bible, 1984, p. 445). The tradition of Paul's companion Thecla who baptized and preached was part of a well established oral tradition in Syria. Paul is also **made to attack the Gnostic practice of treating women as equal to men:**

*1 Tim 2:9-15 9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (KJV)*

*Let us not forget that all the above passages as taken from the Pastoral Epistles are FORGERIES and were not written by the pen of the Gnostic Paul*

- It was the earliest Christian Gnostics that did not have organized clergy but an informal laity
- It was the earliest Christian Gnostics that used "myth" to capture Divine Truth for all eternity
- It was the earliest Christian Gnostics that treated women as equals with men

*All of which the forged Pastoral Epistles condemn!*

At the end of the second century, by the hand of Irenaeus in his "Second New Testament" in 180 C.E., Paul is portrayed by Literalist Christians as anti-Gnostic and authoritarian. This has been assumed to be historically accurate, but is actually **only** the perspective of these Literalist Christians (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, 8-10). Just a few decades earlier, however, this view of the "literalist Roman Church" was the complete opposite and the proof of this is found in the first half of the second century letters attributed to Clement, the Bishop of Rome, who vigorously attacked Paul as a misguided heretic!

**Answer for yourself:** What did Clement of Rome know concerning Paul in the early part of the second century before the later production of the Roman Second New Testament that would cause him to attack Paul and call him a heretic?

**Answer for yourself:** What was the major "heresy" that Rome opposed in those day? Gnosticism!!! Rome was faced with Marcion's First New Testament which contained the authentic Pauline epistles that taught a Gnostic Christ - an allegorical Christ and not a human Christ Jesus which was unacceptable to Rome and its first Bishop.

Ludemann in his Heretics notes other examples of second-century hostility to Paul in addition to Clement's vigorous polemic. Acts contains veiled criticism of Paul. By the criteria of Acts 1:21ff Paul does not qualify as an apostle as he was not with Jesus during his lifetime and had not seen the risen Jesus (G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 54, 57, 199). Pagels suggests that ecclesiastical Christians might have preferred to exclude Paul's letters "but it was too late, he was already a chief apostle and stood in high regard" (Pagels, op. cit., p. 161). Toward the end of the second century the Literalists therefore took another tack. The Pastoral letters, 2 Thessalonians, 3 Corinthians, and other documents were forged to refute specific Gnostic/Pauline doctrines in the apostle's own name (Ludemann, op. cit., 201).

These letters attributed to Clement of Rome describe Peter as vehemently denying Paul's status as an apostle since only an eyewitness of the resurrection should be regarded as an apostle and Paul did not actually see the risen Christ. Paul's vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus is apparently not only invalid, it is a revelation from an evil demon or lying spirit!

**Answer for yourself:** Did you hear that? The first Bishop of Rome believed that Paul's vision of "the Christ" on the road to Damascus where he encounters a purely "Spiritual Christ Jesus" is from a demon!!! This sure will change with the Second New Testament under the influence of later proto-Catholic writers who altered and reworked Paul's Gnosticism to their liking and who remake "the Christ" into a fleshly human being. Clement alludes to the supposed fact that Jesus is "angry" with Paul who is his "adversary," because what Paul preaches is "contradictory" to Jesus' teachings (*Homily*, 19:1-7, quoted in Ludemann, p. 58). Peter writes of Paul as his "enemy" who has convinced some of the Gentiles to reject the Jewish Law and to embrace "foolish teachings," which are "outside the Law." Paul is accused of creating a heretical gospel and Jesus' genuine apostles have to secretly send out "a true gospel" to correct these heresies (*Homily*, 2.17.4, quoted in Ludemann, p. 58). Like his contemporary the arch-heretic Simon Magus, Paul is a satanically inspired divider of the Christian community (Pagels, op. cit., p. 9-10). Ecclesiastical sources that do refer to Paul often express hostility; the *Pseudo-Clementines* suggest that he, like Simon Magus, is a satanically inspired divider of the Roman community that is properly headed by Peter. He is a dangerous man who should be expelled from the Church! (R. Doran, *Birth of a Worldview*, 1995, p. 5). Here Doran describes Paul as a "flash point" in the growing Christian tradition. S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion in Ancient History*, 1969, p. 310ff, calls Paul the "problem figure of primitive Christianity;" Ludemann, op. cit., p. 61ff, calls Paul the "only heretic of the earliest period."

## PAUL AND THE PAGAN MYSTERIES

If we can throw off the traditional picture of Paul and look at the evidence with an open mind this anti-Paul rhetoric is understandable, since his letters show distinct Gnostic and Pagan influences. Paul is a Jew who had embraced the ubiquitous Greek culture of the times. He writes in Greek, his first language. He quotes only from the Greek version of the Old Testament. His ministry is to Pagan cities dominated by Greek culture (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 65). Paul's mother tongue was Greek, and Paul uses only the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. (S.G.F. Brandon, op. cit., 1969, p. 313). Brandon notes that in Galatians 1 Paul states that his teaching was specially designed to be intelligible to those who were not Jews. Ludemann observes that whereas the gospels are "third person accounts," "often contradictory," and "do not come from eyewitnesses," in Paul "we hear his own voice in his mother tongue, free from all background noise, accessible to all who do not shrink from the trouble of reading him (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 61). Of these;

- **Antioch was a center for the Mysteries of Adonis,**
- **Ephesus was a center for the Mysteries of Attis, and**



**Corinth was a center for the Mysteries of Dionysus** (G.A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist?, 1975, p. 183).

Paul was a native of Tarsus in Asia Minor, which by his time had surpassed even Athens and Alexandria to become the major center of Pagan philosophy (D. Ulansey, Origin of the Mithraic Mysteries, 1989, p. 68ff). Strabo writes: *"The people of Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also to the whole round of education in general, that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named where have been schools and lectures of philosophers."* Athenodorus of Tarsus even became a tutor to Emperor Augustus. Athenodorus was in turn a disciple of Posidonius, arguably the greatest philosopher of the first century BCE. Pompey twice turned aside from campaigns in Asia Minor to visit Posidonius and Cicero describes him as a friend. He is one of the first astronomers to make an orrery, which Cicero says "shows in its revolutions the movements of the sun and stars and planets, by day and night, just as they appear in the sky" (Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, p. 159). In his travels to Britain he made the discovery that the moon governs the tides. This he must have considered certain proof of astrology's first axiom, that the heavenly bodies have a direct effect on the physical world. All of the astronomical and astrological knowledge acquired by the Tarsian intellectuals, particularly the discovery of the **precession of the equinoxes** by Hipparchus, who worked at nearby Rhodes, made a major contribution to the **doctrines of Mithraism**. **It was into this city that Paul was born, at a time when Tarsus was at the height of its power and influence. It was in Tarsus that the Mysteries of Mithras had originated, so it would have been unthinkable that Paul would have been unaware of the remarkable similarities we have already explored between Christian doctrines and the teachings of Mithraism** (Ulansey, op. cit., p. 68). **Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, where, according to Plutarch, the Mithraic Mysteries were being practiced as early as 67 BCE.** Ulansey considers it significant that the appearance of Mithraism coincides almost exactly with the lifetime of Posidonius and is in the same part of the Mediterranean. Hipparchus' discovery of the **precession of the equinoxes had revealed that in the cycle known as the "Great Year" the sun was passing from Aries into Pisces at the spring equinox. Mithraic iconography portrays Mithras as the god who turns the wheel of the Great Year and thereby ushers in the New Age. Paul shows himself aware of "the passing age" in 2 Corinthians 4:4.**

**2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)**

Paul frequently uses terms and phrases from the Pagan Mysteries, such as;

- **pneuma** (spirit),
- **gnosis** (divine knowledge),
- **doxa** (glory),
- **sophia** (wisdom),
- **teleioi** (the initiated), and so on

(F.C. Happold, Mysticism, 1963, p. 186; H. Kennedy, St Paul and the Mystery Religions, 1969). **All Paul's terms for mature or perfect Christians are variations on the Greek telete - "initiation."** "Mature" is *teleion*, "to the level of maturity" is *ten teleioteta*, "the perfect man" is *andra teleion*, "the imperfect man" is *ateles*. (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 148, 149, 123). He advises his followers to "earnestly seek the greater charismata"

**1 Cor 12:28-31 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. (KJV)**

The word "charismata" derives from the Mystery term *makarismos*, referring to the blessed nature of one who has seen the Mysteries (W. Burkert, The Orientalizing Revolution, 1992, p. 93), Burkert writes: **"One of the**

*main characteristics of the mysteries is the makarismos, the praise of the 'blessed' status of those who have 'seen' the mysteries."* Charismatic Christians might be interested to know the ancient root of their name.

*1 Cor 4:1 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (KJV)*

Paul even calls himself a "Steward of the Mysteries of God," which is the technical name for a priest in the Mysteries of Serapis (G.A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist?, 1975, p. 23). The Alexandrian cult of Serapis and his consort Isis was widespread in the Greco-Roman world at this time. That Paul might have been a "Steward of the Mysteries" of Serapis is entirely possible. Emperor Hadrian writes of the citizens of Alexandria, "Here you see Christians worshipping Serapis, and worshipers of Serapis who call themselves bishops of Christ" (G. D'Alviella, The Mysteries of Eleusis, 1981, p. 103). Perhaps this throws light on a passage in the New Testament, which has left scholars confused. At Cenchreae, near Corinth, waiting to board a ship bound for Ephesus, Paul "cut his hair for he had made a vow." This is a curious report and not in accordance with Jewish Law, which states that hair is only to be shorn at Jerusalem. Near Cenchreae, however, was a temple of Isis where Greek sailors cut their hair and dedicated it to the goddess as "Stella Maris" in hope of a safe crossing.

Paul quotes the Pagan sage Aratus, who had lived in Tarsus several centuries earlier, describing God "in whom we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

He also teaches Mystery doctrines.

*1 Cor 15:37 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: (KJV)*

Paul uses the most ubiquitous of images from the Mysteries, the reaping and sowing of the crops as a symbol of mystical death and resurrection of an initiate. He speaks of the sprouting of a grain of wheat as an image of the resurrection and writes:

*"The seed you sow does not come to life unless it has first died."*

Like the Pagan sage Socrates, who was deemed wise because he knew he knew nothing (Plato, *Apology*, 23b) Paul teaches:

*1 Cor 8:2 2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. (KJV)*

Just as Plato had written that we now only see reality "*through a glass dimly*" (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250 b) so Paul writes, *1 Cor 13:12 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (KJV)*

This famous passage from Paul has also been translated:

*At present all we see is the baffling reflection of reality; we are like men looking at a landscape in a small mirror. The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face* (Phillips translation quoted in F.C. Happold, Mysticism, 1963, p. 194).

This translation clearly brings out the Platonic nature of Paul's teachings. Plato had used the image of prisoners trapped in a cave who are only able to see the shadows of the outside world cast on the cave walls as an allegory for our present condition of mistaking for real what is in fact only a reflection of ultimate reality



(Plato, *The Republic*, Book 7). For Plato, as for Paul, **"At present all we see is the baffling reflection of reality."**

Plato teaches that philosophers are those who are released from the cave to go outside and see the reality of the dazzling light of day for themselves - "face to face." **This phrase is a ritual formula of the Pagan Mysteries.** In *The Bacchae* we read: "He gave these Mysteries to me *face to face*." (Euripides, *The Bacchae*, 207, line 501). Lucius Apuleius writes of his initiation: "I penetrated into the very presence of the gods below and the gods above, where I worshiped *face to face*." (quoted in S. Angus, *Mystery Religions*, 1925, p.61). Justin Martyr acknowledges that: "The aim of Platonism is to see God *face to face* (Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, 2.3, quoted in E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 249). Plato describes how in the temple of the "true earth," which exists in the realm of ideas of which this Earth is a mere image, "Communion with the gods occurs *face to face*" (Plato, *Phaedo*, 111c). The Gnostic Valentinus also wrote of the Logos "who spoke of realities face to face (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 299).

**[Let us continue with article 2 in this series.](#)**



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## WAS PAUL A GNOSTIC? #2

### THE GNOSTIC PAUL

Paul's Christ Jesus is the mystical dying and resurrecting godman of the Gnostics, not the historical figure of the Literalists. The only place where Paul seems to treat Jesus as a historical figure is in the Letter to Timothy, where supposedly he writes in I Tim. 6:13

*1 Tim 6:13 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; (KJV)*

**But as we have shown this this letter is a forgery.** The genuine Paul preaches the Gnostic doctrine of Illusionism, claiming that Jesus came not as a person but in the "likeness" of human flesh.

*Rom 8:3 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (KJV)*

*Phil 2:7 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** What does the word "likeness" mean when looked up in the Greek?

Strong's Concordance says:

3667 homoïoma (hom-oy'-o-mah); from 3666; a form; abstractly, resemblance: KJV-- made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon says:

3667 homoïoma- what has been made after the likeness of something

- a) a figure, a image, a likeness, a representation
- b) likeness that is, resemblance, such as amounts almost to equality or identity

Take just a second and ponder what you just saw from the Greek. Without a doubt in the Greek we see what escapes us in the English; namely, that the Son of God, the Christ as we have seen, is not truly human but only a resemblance and an image and representation of mankind. This is what both Paul and Marcion believed and taught as found in the First New Testament before Rome would destroy it and replace it with their Second New Testament which alters this Christ and makes him into a human being which causes adherents of such faith idolators!

Paul's Paul's letters are full of such distinctively Gnostic doctrines.



**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever stopped and wondered what Paul's famous claim to have ascended as far as the third heaven could possibly mean?

What we fail to understand today under the influence of Western literalistic Christianity is that this would not be puzzling for a Gnostic or an initiate of the Pagan Mysteries, for both would have been taught that there are seven heavens linked to the seven heavenly bodies - the five visible planets and the moon and sun. **It was obvious to Celsus that Christianity and Mithraism were teaching the same doctrine**, (R. J. Hoffman Celsus On The True Doctrine, 1987, p. 95). As Ulansey notes, Christianity and Mithraism were "sister religions, arising at the same time and in the same geographical area" (D. Ulansey, Origin of Mithraic Mysteries, 1989, p. 4). Brandon writes: *"Paul's many references to the archontes, the stoicheia, and the pleroma all indicate his easy familiarity with esoteric concepts of a Gnostic hierarchy of supernatural powers"* (S.G.F. Brandon, Religion In Ancient History, 1969, p. 44).

**Like the Gnostics, Paul is extremely disparaging of the externals of religion - ceremonies, holy days, rules, and regulations.**

*Rom 14:1-5 1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (KJV)*

*Phil 3:3 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (KJV)*

*Col 2:20-22 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? (KJV)*

**As noted, the Gnostics preached the same freedom from human legislation - especially religious laws.**

**Answer for yourself:** Could this be the reason why Paul is anti-Torah? It sure is!!!

Simon of Samaria quoted Paul in defense of his own freedom, saying, "Men are saved by grace, and not on account of their own righteous works." The followers of Carpocrates declared themselves saved "by faith and love" and considered all things "not good or evil in themselves, but only by convention," (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 44-5).

*2 Cor 3:12-18 12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (KJV)*

Like the Gnostics, he claims that true Christians become like Christ: having "no veil over the face" they "reflect as in a mirror the splendor of the Lord" and are thus "transfigured into his likeness, from splendor to splendor."

**Paul's imagery in 2 Cor. 3:12-18 is uncannily similar to the initiation rites in the Greek Mysteries.**

Novices wore veils, hence their appellation as "brides." At this stage they were known as *mystae* - those with "closed eyes." Only at the highest stage of initiation was the veil removed and the *mystae* became *epoptae* - those who had "seen." **This is the stage that Paul insists that the Corinthians should have reached.**

**The Gnostics saw Paul as a teacher of secret "Pneumatic" initiations.** In his Letter to the Romans Paul writes: "I long to see you, so that I may share with you a certain Pneumatic charisma of which he says, "I would not have you remain ignorant."

*Rom 1:9-14 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren (devoid of Gnosis), that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** If Paul wants to urgently share something with his correspondents, why doesn't he write it in his letter?

**The answer for the Gnostics is that the "Pneumatic charisma" is an initiation, which he can only transmit in person and "in secret."** (Pagels, op. cit., p. 15).

Paul writes:

*1 Cor 2:9 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

**Initiated readers would undoubtedly recognize these words as a Mystery formula pronounced at the time of initiation.** As Christians devoid of knowledge of Gnosticism and the truth about Paul we read these passages never understanding that they reflect Gnosticism. The vow of secrecy undertaken by the followers of the Gnostic sage Justinus incorporated these words and, among other places, they also occur in the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, where Jesus offers:

*I will give you what eye has not seen, and what ear has not heard, what has not been touched, and what has not arisen in the heart of man.*

(Quoted in Pagels, op. cit., p. 58). Hippolytus records this as the oath of secrecy in Justinus' Gnostic group. It also occurs in *The Gospel of Thomas*, Saying 17, and in the first epistle of Clement, (A. Louth, *Early Christian Writings*, 1968, p. 37).

**It is only our inadequate knowledge concerning the religious beliefs associated with Gnosticism and inadequate textual translation that conceals the fact that Paul's letters are full of characteristically Gnostic phrases and teachings.** For example, the Valentinians claim that **Paul initiated Christians into the "Mystery of Sophia,"** which probably included the myth of the goddess' fall and redemption, and quote as proof his First Letter to the Corinthians, in which Paul writes: **"We speak of Sophia among the initiated."**



*1 Cor 2:6-9 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

If you are wondering why you have never come across this decidedly Gnostic line of Paul's before, it is because it is usually translated as "We speak wisdom among the perfected," which doesn't make a lot of sense but at least sounds orthodox!

*Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

This translation, if intelligible at all, distorts Paul's actual meaning considerably. One modern scholar explains:

The proper meaning of this passage is obscured at two crucial points.

- The Greek word translated "world" here, severally in its singular or plural forms, is *aion*, which does not mean this physical world or earth, but "time" or "age." Paul's use of *aion* here accordingly shows that he was thinking in terms of an esoteric system of "world-ages."
- Next, the words translated as "rulers of this world" (*archontes tou aionos toutou*) do not refer, as is popularly supposed, to the Roman and Jewish authorities who were responsible for condemning Jesus to death; they denote demonic beings, who were associated with the planets and were believed to govern the lives of men on earth. This is very important in our understanding of the later death of "the Christ."

In this passage, then, Paul is found explaining that, before the beginning of a series of world-ages, God determined to send into the world, for the good of mankind, a preexistent divine being, whom the demonic rulers of the world, not perceiving his real nature, put to death and thereby in some way confounded themselves. In brief, Paul envisaged mankind as enslaved by demonic beings, connected with astral phenomena, whom he describes by a variety of terms such as *archontes tou aionos toutou* and *stoicheia tou kosmou* ("The elemental powers of the universe"). From this mortal slavery mankind had, accordingly, been rescued by the divine being, who, **incarnated in the LIKENESS of a person named Christ Jesus**, had been crucified mistakenly by these *archontes* who, presumably, by thus unwittingly exceeding their rights, forfeited their control over men (S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion In Ancient History*, 1969, p. 327).

*1 Pet 1:20 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (KJV)*

This is not Christianity as we know it today! Paul is preaching Gnosticism. Paul writes of a Gnosis which can be taught only to the "fully initiated."

He offers a prayer "that your love may more and more be bursting with Gnosis."

*Phil 1:9 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge (Gnosis) and in all judgment; (KJV)*

In 1 Corinthians Paul seems to diminish the importance of Gnosis, claiming, "Gnosis puffs up." But Clement

explains that this is not to be understood as "swollen up," but means in fact "to entertain great and true sentiments," (Clement, *Stromata*, 68). **To the Gnostics, including Clement, the Gnosis was the Pneumatic initiation of the holy breath or spirit.**

He writes of "Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of Sophia and Gnosis" and of "the Gnosis of God's Mystery."

*Col 2:3 3 In whom (the Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom (Gnosis) and knowledge. (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic initiate Paul claims: "By revelation the Mystery was made known to me.

*Eph 3:3 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic defending the secrecy of the Inner Mysteries he asserts that he has heard "ineffable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

*2 Cor 12:4 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic he puts the emphasis on understanding, not on dogma, writing, "The letter kills, while the spirit gives life."

*2 Cor 3:6 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (KJV)*

And like a Gnostic, he describes stories in the scriptures as "allegories".

*Eph 4:24 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

And like a Gnostic, he writes of "events" as "symbolic."

*1 Cor 10:6 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (KJV)*

The evidence keeps mounting. Paul is Gnostic and is not teaching a human Christ Jesus but rather a Gnostic Christ mediator in the Spirit realm. That is why the Gnostic Marcion who gave us the First New Testament claimed that only Paul understood "the Christ" and his message correctly. Take a second and consider this: The seven authentic epistles of Paul do not teach a human Christ Jesus. That means the passages that you have read your whole life about "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" in the Pauline epistles NEVER were meant to refer to a human being named Jesus of Nazareth!

**Answer for yourself:** Did you understand?

This just shows us how inept we are at interpreting the religious literature we possess and cherish. It also shows us how unprepared are our spiritual authorities, preachers, and pastors are who are given the responsibility of teaching us about God. I used be one and it was during my time in Seminary that I realized that something terribly was wrong with what I am being taught. I used to call it "swiss cheese theology" as it was full of holes. It would take me many years to plumb the depths of this religious source we call the Holy Bible and little was I prepared for what I would uncover in scholarly study. Yet I was reassured at the same time that with every lie and falsehood exposed and replaced with the original truth that I would be taking a step closer to the God of truth.



## APOSTLE OF THE RESURRECTION

Literalist Christians tried to quote Paul to endorse their bizarre belief that at the Second Coming the dead would actually rise from their graves in their physical bodies. (G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 26). The Literalists Irenaeus and Tertullian both preached the resurrection of the flesh. They did this by a devious exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15, which nonetheless failed to overcome the problem of Paul's categorical denial of this doctrine in 1 Corinthians 15:50.

*1 Cor 15:50 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (KJV)*

It is clear, however, that Paul had a very different perspective. In common with the Gnostics, Paul sees the resurrection as a spiritual event. He writes categorically that *"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."* Rarely do we stop and ponder just what this verse implies. Irenaeus was evidently frustrated about this verse and complained, "All heretics (Gnostics) always introduce this passage" (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 85). To counter the Gnostic disciples of Paul, someone in the second century wrote 3 Corinthians to cast doubt on 1 Corinthians (F.L. Cross, The Oxford Dictionary Of The Christian Church, 1958, p. 1031). This states: "As for those who tell you that there is no resurrection of the flesh, for them there will be no resurrection (3 Corinthians v 24) We see the same testimony in Ludemann, op. cit., p. 224. The triumph of the Literalists in the fourth century rendered 3 Corinthians unnecessary and the forged text was excluded from the canon."

The Gnostic sage Theodotus calls Paul "the apostle of the resurrection" (Pagels, op. cit., 5, 14). Like the Gnostics, Paul does not see the resurrection as a promised future event, but as a spiritual experience that can happen right now. He writes, "This is it: the duly appointed time! This is it : the day of salvation"

*2 Cor 6:2 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) (KJV)*

Paul's message is clearly mystical and allegorical - he writes of being "raised up to heaven" and "enthroned with Jesus" not as some hoped - for afterlife reward, but as something, which he and other Christian initiates have already experienced.

*Eph 2:4-7 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

This is the Gnostic Salvation Message. The writer is speaking about something already accomplished for mankind by God and available to them in the present time. Like the Gnostics, Paul preaches that Christ Jesus' passion is not an event in the past, but a enduring mystical reality. Through sharing in Jesus' death and resurrection each Christian initiate can themselves die to their lower self and be resurrected as the Christ or Logos (W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, 1899, p. 64).

*Rom 6:4 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (KJV)*

*Rom 8:11 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised*

*up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (KJV)*

Inge notes: "Paul's mystical language about death and resurrection has given rise to much controversy."

In his Letter to the Philippians Paul writes of "participating in his suffering" and "sharing in the form of his death," and so being "resurrected from the dead."

*Phil 3:10-11 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Galatians he writes:

*Gal 2:20 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Romans he interprets Jesus' passion allegorically, writing:

*Rom 6:3-7 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. (KJV)*

J. Campbell, Papers From The Eranos Yearbooks, 1955, p. 238 states: "It lies in the nature of the mystery cult that the mystae undergo the same experience as their god, that, as St. Paul says, they die with him, are buried with him, are reborn with him, and are resurrected with him."

In his Letter to the Colossians Paul describes himself as having been assigned by God the task of delivering his message "in full"; of announcing "the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations," which is now being disclosed to those chosen by God.

**Answer for yourself:** And what is this great secret?

**Answer for yourself:** Is it, as we might expect from an orthodox apostle, the "good news" that Jesus had literally come and walked the Earth, worked miracles, died for our sins, and returned from the dead? No! It is the perennial mysticism of Gnosticism and the Pagan Mysteries - that within each one of us is the one Soul of the Universe, the Logos, the Universal Daemon, the Mind of God. the Christ (T. Freke and P. Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, p. 166-167).

Paul writes:

**The secret is this: Christ in you!**

*Col 1:25-28 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28*



*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

When Paul describes his famous vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus it is significant what Paul does not say. Let us look at the verse very closely:

*Gal 1:15-16 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (KJV)*

Notice that Paul doesn't say "God revealed his Son to me," as we would expect from a Literalist Christian. Rather, he writes, "God revealed his Son in me."

Paul's Jesus is not a historical figure, but a symbol of the Universal Daemon of whom we are all limbs. For Paul, "Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are together make up one body."

*1 Cor 12:12 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (KJV)*

*Rom 12:4 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Ephesians he teaches:

*Eph 4:25 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** But what do we do with a flesh and blood Jesus?

In earlier articles we made mention of the "Outer Mysteries" and the "Inner Mysteries". The Gnostics claimed that Paul taught that seeing Jesus as a flesh and blood man was only a transitory stage for beginners - the Outer Mysteries for Psychic Christians. Those Pneumatic Christians initiated into the Inner Mysteries understood the Jesus story's allegorical meaning. The Gnostics claimed that this change of perspective from a "physical" Christ Jesus to a "spiritual" Christ Jesus through initiation into the Inner Mysteries is what Paul was referring to when he wrote:

*2 Cor 5:16 16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. (KJV)*

W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, 1899, p. 69, states that the heretics (Gnostic Christians) claimed that the stage of worshipping the man Christ Jesus was a stage to be passed through and then left behind as one matured spiritually by ascending from the Outer Mysteries into the Inner Mysteries.

**Answer for yourself:** Can you find one place where Paul in his original and authentic epistles spoke of a historical Jesus? No! As stated in an earlier article it is "ONLY" in the forged Pastoral Epistles where we find Paul speaking of a supposed historical Christ Jesus.

Since Paul never claimed to have known a historical Jesus "in the flesh," it is indeed difficult to see what else he could have meant!

## PSYCHIC AND PNEUMATIC TEACHINGS

**Answer for yourself:** So how could Paul have come to be both the hero of the "allegorical" Gnostics and the Literalists Roman Catholics?

**As we saw above the Gnostics taught that the Jesus story works on two levels at once:**

- **Christ Jesus was taught as an introductory story for Psychic Christians initiated into the Outer Mysteries**
- **Christ Jesus was taught later to initiates as a mystical allegory for Pneumatic Christians initiated into the Inner Mysteries.**

The irony of this is opposite of what we expect today; namely that the "literal" is the true and the "allegorical" is the untrue. Just the opposite is the case here. It is the "allegorical" Christ that is real and the "literal" Christ Jesus as a human being is the myth. There is no explicit evidence for the existence for a historical Jesus outside this one book given to us by the "literalist" Roman Church...the New Testament which they themselves produced as a refutation of the earlier Gnostic First New Testament of Marcion. Although it was understood in two completely different ways, the story remained the same. **According to the Gnostics, Paul's letters were likewise designed to work on two levels. As the Gnostic sage Theodotus puts it, Paul "taught in two ways at once."** (Quoted in E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Christ*, 1975, p. 7). Theodotus claims that Paul recognized that "each one knows the Lord in his own way; and not all know him alike." (Ibid., p. 5). **So on the one hand Paul preached the savior "according to the flesh" as one "who was born and suffered." This was an a "literal" introduction to carnal believers in preparation for their spiritual transformation and resurrection as they were initiated to the Inner Mystery of "Christ in you"! This "kerygmatic gospel" of "Christ crucified" he taught to Psychic Christians "because this they were capable of knowing."** But to Pneumatic Christians he proclaimed Christ "pneumatically" or "according to the spirit." Each level of initiate would take from these teachings whatever they were wise enough to be able to hear. Paul himself writes:

**1 Cor 2:14-15 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. (KJV)**

Let us re-word this verse a little:

**The Psychic does not receive the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness to him; he cannot recognize them, because they are Pneumatically discerned, but the Pneumatic discerns all things.**

The Gnostics claimed that like the gospel parables, Paul's letters encoded secret teachings so that uninitiated readers would hear one thing and the initiated another. Only those who had been initiated into the secret oral teachings of the Inner Mysteries were capable of understanding Paul's deeper meaning. As Elaine Pagels writes,

**The Valentinians claim that most Christians make the mistake of reading the scriptures only literally. They themselves, through their initiation into Gnosis, learned to read Paul's letters (as they read all the scriptures) on the symbolic level, as they say Paul intended. Only this pneumatic reading yields "the truth" instead of its mere outward "image" (Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul*, 1975, p. 7).**

The followers of Valentinus systematically decoded the allegorical meaning of Paul's letters to show their hidden meaning. For example, in his letters to the Romans Paul uses a simple everyday situation - the relationship between Jews and Gentiles - as a parable for the relation between Psychic and Pneumatic Christians. An initiate of the Inner Mysteries would understand that where Paul writes "Jews" he means "Psychic Christians" and where he writes "Gentiles," he means "Pneumatic Christians". Paul calls himself "apostle to the Gentiles" in Romans 1:5 because he is a Pneumatic teacher of the Inner Mysteries. Yet he comes to teach Christians of all levels, both "the wise [Pneumatics] and to the foolish [Psychics]".



*Rom 1:14 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (KJV)*

As well as "Gentiles," the other code words used by Paul to signify "Pneumatic Christian" include "the uncircumcised," "the Greeks," "Jews inwardly," "Jews in secret," and "the true Israel." (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 7).

In a striking passage in his First Letter to the Corinthians Paul writes with disappointment of wanting to give his followers Pneumatic teachings, but finding them only to be on a "Sarkic" level of awareness (a term synonymous with "Hylic," meaning the lowest level of human awareness). So he is forced to teach his students only the most basic of Christian doctrines:

*1 Cor 3:1-3 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (KJV)*

Now let us read it again with a few choice words:

*And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to Pneumatics, but as to Sarkics, as to those uninitiated in Christ. I fed you milk, not meat, for you were not yet able to take it. Nor are you now - you are still Sarkic. For where there is strife and envy among you, are you not Sarkic.* (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 59).

Likewise in his Letter to the Hebrews 5:11-14, Paul is impatient that his followers are still not ready to move on from elementary teachings. He writes:

*Heb 5:11-14 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (KJV)* (E. Pagels, op. cit., 148-9).

Paul is impatient that his followers are still not ready to move on from elementary teachings. In his Letter to the Hebrews he writes:

*Heb 6:1-6 1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word [LOGOS/CHRIST] of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance...(KJV)*

The "elementary doctrine," which Paul wants his disciples to leave behind, as a Gnostic would expect, includes repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Answer for yourself: What do all of these have in common? All of these involve rituals and dogmas so precious to the Literalist Church but which Gnostics did not esteem. To the Gnostics these were only the Psychic Outer Mysteries of Christianity. Paul wants his disciples, having tasted the holy breath of

**Pneumatic initiation, to progress to the Pneumatic level of understanding completely and leave behind such Psychic concerns.**

## PAUL AND JEHOVAH AND THE TORAH/LAW

Like the Gnostics, Paul teaches that the Mysteries of Jesus supersede the Law of the Jewish god Jehovah.

In Galatians 3:2-3 Paul asks:

*Gal 3:2-3 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (KJV)*

Paul's Gnostic Christ Jesus has given Jews a New Covenant or agreement with God and Paul does not hide his low opinion of the redundant old agreement that is traditional Judaism!" He writes:

*Phil 3:5-6 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. (KJV)*

Paul gives a full account of his justification according to Jewish Law - - circumcised on the eighth day, Israelite by race, of the tribe of Benjamin, and a zealous Pharisee - "by the law's standard righteous without fault." Startlingly, he says in verse 8 that he counts all this as "so much rubbish."

*Heb 8:13 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (KJV)*

**Like the Gnostics, Paul does not preach moral servitude to the Law, but spiritual freedom through Gnosis.** He declares:

*2 Cor 3:17 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (KJV)*

For Paul, "Nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom. 14:1-15). Later Gnostics, such as Carpocrates, quote Paul to defend their own doctrines of natural morality against those who accused them of immorality. After all, it was Paul, not some "loony" Gnostic heretic, who had famously proclaimed: "All things are authorized for me!"

*1 Cor 6:12 12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (KJV)*

Paul even goes so far as to declare Jehovah's traditionally sacred Law, the very basis of the Jewish religion, to be a curse, writing, "*All who depend upon works of the Law are under a curse*" (Gal. 3:6-11) and "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law*" (Gal. 3:13-14). For Paul, as for the Gnostics, through sharing in Christ's suffering and resurrection the Christian initiate can be redeemed from the Law and set free: "*Now, having died, we are out of the purview of the Law that kept us down*" (Rom. 7:6).

*Rom 7:6 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (KJV)*

Paul claims the Law is the product of the "mediator."

**Answer for yourself:** What does he mean by calling Jehovah, supposedly the one God and creator of all, a "mediator?" A mediator between what and what?



Literalists have no answer, but Gnostics immediately recognize that Paul is teaching the Gnostic doctrine that Jehovah is the "demiurge," a lesser god who mediates between the ineffable supreme God and creation. Paul certainly does not regard Jehovah as the true God, for he continues: "The mediator is not one; God is one" (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 107-108).

*Gal 3:19-20 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (KJV)*

According to Paul, people who do not understand the gospel he is preaching have had their "unbelieving minds blinded by the god of this passing age".

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

In many translations of his letters, the editor adds a helpful little note here to explain the mysterious phrase "the god of this passing age." The general orthodox gloss on this line is that Paul is referring to the Devil, but why he should refer to a wicked angel as a "god" is left unexplained! To the Gnostics it was obvious what Paul meant. He was referring to Jehovah, the lesser god of the Jews, whose years of ruling the Jewish people were coming to an end and who was to be abandoned in favor of the true ineffable God of Jesus and Plato.

## CIRCUMCISION

The anti-Gnostic letters of Paul have been found to be forgeries, but his authentic letters do oppose others within the early Christian Church who preach "another Jesus."

*2 Cor 11:4 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (KJV)*

These are not Gnostic heretics, however, but pro-Jewish Christians who believe that the Church should maintain the old Jewish custom of circumcision and honor the Law of Jehovah.

Paul attacks them with passion. In his Letter to the Philippians he warns:

*Phil 3:2 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Galatians he proclaims:

*Gal 5:2 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (KJV)*

Paul goes on to say:

*Gal 5:12 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. (KJV)*

It is not such outer Psychic observances of religious rituals, but inner Pneumatic qualities, which mark the Mysteries Paul is preaching. He claims:

*Phil 3:3 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (KJV)*

Let us again reword this with different words:

*We are the circumcised, we whose worship is Pneumatic (spiritual), whose pride is in Jesus Christ, and who put no confidence in anything external.*

**Paul's teachings here are completely in line with those of the Gnostic Jesus.** In *The Gospel of Thomas*, for example, when the disciples ask Jesus about the benefits of circumcision, he explains:

If it were beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. Rather the true circumcision in spirit has become completely profitable (quoted in J.M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 1978, p. 132, sayubg 53).

What characterizes Paul's rival Christians is not their Gnosticism as opposed to Paul's Literalism, or their Literalism as opposed to Paul's Gnosticism. This is not the issue at all. **Their disagreement is over the relationship between Christians and old Jewish traditions, and whether Christianity should be open to non-Jews, and if so in what way. The battles in the Church of Paul's time were not between Literalists and Gnostics, but between Christians with different views on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.**

Paul's letters suggest that these more traditional Jewish-Christians live in Jerusalem. They have traditionally been taken to be Peter and others of Jesus' disciples who are mentioned in the New Testament. As we have already shown, this is actually an interpretation of the evidence based on unjustified preconceptions. Let us remember that the Book of Acts as Scholars attest today was a late second century document that appeared after Irenaeus in 180 C.E. Let us not forget who has control of writing these documents at this time; namely anti-Gnostic literalists. **Having said that then understand that there is absolutely no evidence to support the idea that there ever existed a Jerusalem Church of the apostles as envisaged by traditional Roman Christianity. In fact, quite the opposite is true.** (S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion In Ancient History*, 1969, p. 268). **Indeed, when in 160 C.E. Bishop Melito of Sardis went to Judea to discover what had become of the legendary Jerusalem Church, to his dismay he found not the descendants of the apostles, but instead a small group of Gnostics!** (G. Ludemann, *Heretics*, 1995), p. 31). **Apparently this group of apostates was all that was left of the Jerusalem Church that God had so carefully preserved from destruction in 70 CE. Irenaeus leaves us in no doubt that the Ebionites were Gnostics** (G. Ludemann, *Heretics*, 1995, p. 247, note 111). Epiphanius tells us that the Ebionites were vegetarians (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 203). **This was a practice almost universally associated with Pythagoreanism in the ancient world.** These Christians, who called themselves the Ebionites or "Poor Men," had their own *Gospel of the Ebionites* and also a *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, and a *Gospel of the Nazarenes*" (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 129). All of these gospels differed significantly from the gospels of the New Testament. It should be remembered that these Nazarenes knew nothing of the Nazareth legend, which was subsequently developed by the "in order that it might be fulfilled" school of historicizers (Ibid., 128-9). This form of Jewish-Christian Gnosticism managed to survive for many hundreds of years (Ibid., p. 126). The Nazarenes were still found scattered throughout Syria and the Decapolis in the late fourth century.

The Literalist propagandist Eusebius explains the fact that the Jerusalem Church had turned out to be made up of Gnostics by claiming that they had obviously all "apostated" from their original Literalism and become heretics - but he does not explain why or how this might have happened! **Actually the evidence suggests that the Jerusalem Christians had always been Gnostics, because in the first century the Christian community was made up entirely of different types of Gnosticism!**

## CONCLUSION

Answer for yourself: So was Paul a Gnostic? Let's review a little of what we have discovered:



- The Gnostics claimed that their spiritual lineage stemmed from Paul and that they were privy to secret oral teachings taught by Paul to select disciples.
- Gnostics had many gospels which they attributed to Paul, their "Great Apostle."
- Many Gnostic groups claimed Paul as their founding father.
- By the middle of the second century the communities to which Paul had written his letters are known to have been centers of Marcionite Gnosticism.
- Paul's anti-Gnostic Pastoral letters are fakes, forged in the late second century. In the genuine letters Paul is not anti-Gnostic and never mentions a historical Jesus.
- Literalist Christians of the early second century attack Paul, who they claim "contradicts" the true teaching and is the "adversary" of Jesus.
- Paul was born in Tarsus, a major center for the Pagan Mysteries, and often uses terms from the Mysteries in his letters. He even calls himself a "Steward of the Mysteries of God," the term for a priest in the Pagan Mysteries of Serapis. Paul quotes Pagan sages and teaches Pagan doctrines.
- When properly translated, Paul's letters reveal a powerful Gnostic content. Paul regularly uses Gnostic terms. He is a teacher of a Pneumatic initiation. He journeyed mystically to the third heaven. He teaches that Jesus came only in the "likeness" of flesh. He is disparaging of external religion. He describes the scriptures as "allegories" and "symbolic." He rejects the Law of Jehovah, who he calls "the mediator" and "the god of this passing age."
- While the Literalists saw the resurrection as the promise that they would rise from their graves and experience bodily immortality after the Second Coming, Paul teaches the Gnostic doctrine that the resurrection is a mystical experience that can be had here and now.
- The great secret that Paul claims to be able to reveal is not that Jesus literally walked the Earth, but the mystical revelation of "Christ in you."
- The Gnostics claimed that, like the gospels, Paul's letters encoded secret teachings. Paul taught in "two ways at once": the Outer Mysteries to Psychic initiates and the Inner Mysteries to Pneumatic initiates. Paul's letters can be understood in different ways because they were designed to speak on different levels simultaneously.
- Paul is frustrated with his disciples because they are not ready to abandon "elementary" Christianity and move on to the deeper level.

**All of the evidence strongly suggests that Paul was indeed a Gnostic just as the Gnostics themselves had claimed all along.** Yet, upon reflection we felt that to call Paul a Gnostic was, in a sense, misleading. The more one looks at the evidence the more it seemed that to apply the terms "Gnostic" and "Literalist" to the Christianity of the first century was actually meaningless. From Paul's letters it is clear that the Christian community of this period was deeply divided, **yet this schism was not between Gnostics and Literalists, as was the case by the end of the second century.** Paul is neither anti-Gnostic nor pro-Gnostic, because in his day the great schism between Gnostics and Literalists had yet to occur.

**At the time of Paul, the strands of thought that would become Gnosticism and Literalism were harmoniously co-existing as the Inner and Outer teachings of the Jesus Mysteries.** The theological battle that Paul is engaged in is between those initiates of the Jesus Mysteries who want to maintain a traditional and distinctively Jewish identity and those, like himself, who wish to make their new Mysteries completely "modern" and cosmopolitan.

**Paul has all the characteristics we would expect to find in an initiator of the Jesus Mysteries.** When something is true then "everything" starts to fall into place. We see that repeatedly in these articles. The picture presented of the origins of Christianity explains the evidence, is internally consistent and beautifully simple once you understand Gnosticism and can differentiate between what writings are authentically Pauline and which ones were later anti-Gnostic forgeries in Paul's name.

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## WAS PAUL A GNOSTIC? #3

### PAUL AND THE PAGAN MYSTERIES

If we can throw off the traditional picture of Paul and **look at the evidence with an open mind this anti-Paul rhetoric is understandable, since his letters show distinct Gnostic and Pagan influences.** Paul is a Jew who had embraced the ubiquitous Greek culture of the times. He writes in Greek, his first language. He quotes only from the Greek version of the Old Testament. His ministry is to Pagan cities dominated by Greek culture (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 65). Paul's mother tongue was Greek, and **Paul uses only the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.** (S.G.F. Brandon, op. cit., 1969, p. 313). **Brandon notes that in Galatians 1 Paul states that his teaching was specially designed to be intelligible to those who were not Jews.** Ludemann observes that whereas the gospels are "third person accounts," "often contradictory," and "do not come from eyewitnesses," in Paul "we hear his own voice in his mother tongue, free from all background noise, accessible to all who do not shrink from the trouble of reading him (Ludemann, op. cit., p. 61). Of these;

- **Antioch was a center for the Mysteries of Adonis,**
- **Ephesus was a center for the Mysteries of Attis, and**
- **Corinth was a center for the Mysteries of Dionysus** (G.A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?*, 1975, p. 183).

Paul was a native of Tarsus in Asia Minor, which by his time had surpassed even Athens and Alexandria to become the major center of Pagan philosophy (D. Ulansey, *Origin of the Mithraic Mysteries*, 1989, p. 68ff). Strabo writes: ***"The people of Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also to the whole round of education in general, that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named where have been schools and lectures of philosophers."*** Athenodorus of Tarsus even became a tutor to Emperor Augustus. Athenodorus was in turn a disciple of Posidonius, arguably the greatest philosopher of the first century BCE. Pompey twice turned aside from campaigns in Asia Minor to visit Posidonius and Cicero describes him as a friend. He is one of the first astronomers to make an orrery, which Cicero says "shows in its revolutions the movements of the sun and stars and planets, by day and night, just as they appear in the sky" (Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, p. 159). In his travels to Britain he made the discovery that the moon governs the tides. This he must have considered certain proof of astrology's first axiom, that the heavenly bodies have a direct effect on the physical world. All of the astronomical and astrological knowledge acquired by the Tarsian intellectuals, particularly the discovery of the **precession of the equinoxes** by Hipparchus, who worked at nearby Rhodes, made a major contribution to the **doctrines of Mithraism. It was into this city that Paul was born, at a time when Tarsus was at the height of its power and influence. It was in Tarsus that the Mysteries of Mithras had originated, so it would have been unthinkable that Paul would have been unaware of the remarkable similarities we have already explored between Christian doctrines and the teachings of Mithraism** (Ulansey, op. cit., p. 68). **Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, where, according to Plutarch, the Mithraic Mysteries were being practiced as early as 67 BCE.** Ulansey considers it significant that the appearance of Mithraism coincides almost exactly with the lifetime of Posidonius and is in the same part of the Mediterranean. Hipparchus' discovery of the **precession of the equinoxes had revealed that in the cycle known as the "Great Year" the sun was passing from Aries into Pisces at the spring equinox. Mithraic iconography portrays Mithras as the god who turns the wheel of the Great Year and**

**thereby ushers in the New Age. Paul shows himself aware of "the passing age" in 2 Corinthians 4:4.**

***2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)***

Paul frequently uses terms and phrases from the Pagan Mysteries, such as;

- **pneuma** (spirit),
- **gnosis** (divine knowledge),
- **doxa** (glory),
- **sophia** (wisdom),
- **teleioi** (the initiated), and so on

(F.C. Happold, Mysticism, 1963, p. 186; H. Kennedy, St Paul and the Mystery Religions, 1969). **All Paul's terms for mature or perfect Christians are variations on the Greek telete - "initiation."** "Mature" is *teleion*, "to the level of maturity" is *ten teleioteta*, "the perfect man" is *andra teleion*, "the imperfect man" is *ateles*. (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 148, 149, 123). He advises his followers to "earnestly seek the greater charismata"

***1 Cor 12:28-31 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. (KJV)***

The word "charismata" derives from the Mystery term *makarismos*, referring to the blessed nature of one who has seen the Mysteries (W. Burkert, The Orientalizing Revolution, 1992, p. 93), Burkert writes: **"One of the main characteristics of the mysteries is the makarismos, the praise of the 'blessed' status of those who have 'seen' the mysteries."** Charismatic Christians might be interested to know the ancient root of their name.

***1 Cor 4:1 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (KJV)***

**Paul even calls himself a "Steward of the Mysteries of God," which is the technical name for a priest in the Mysteries of Serapis** (G.A. Wells, Did Jesus Exist?, 1975, p. 23). **The Alexandrian cult of Serapis and his consort Isis was widespread in the Greco-Roman world at this time. That Paul might have been a "Steward of the Mysteries" of Serapis is entirely possible.** Emperor Hadrian writes of the citizens of Alexandria, "Here you see Christians worshiping Serapis, and worshipers of Serapis who call themselves bishops of Christ" (G. D'Alviella, The Mysteries of Eleusis, 1981, p. 103). Perhaps this throws light on a passage in the New Testament, which has left scholars confused. At Cenchreae, near Corinth, waiting to board a ship bound for Ephesus, Paul "cut his hair for he had made a vow." **This is a curious report and not in accordance with Jewish Law, which states that hair is only to be shorn at Jerusalem. Near Cenchreae, however, was a temple of Isis where Greek sailors cut their hair and dedicated it to the goddess as "Stella Maris" in hope of a safe crossing.**

Paul quotes the Pagan sage Aratus, who had lived in Tarsus several centuries earlier, describing God "in whom we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

He also teaches Mystery doctrines.

***1 Cor 15:37 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it***



*may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: (KJV)*

Paul uses the most ubiquitous of **images from the Mysteries**, the reaping and sowing of the crops as a **symbol of mystical death and resurrection of an initiate. He speaks of the sprouting of a grain of wheat as an image of the resurrection and writes:**

*"The seed you sow does not come to life unless it has first died."*

Like the Pagan sage Socrates, who was deemed wise because he knew he knew nothing (Plato, *Apology*, 23b) Paul teaches:

*1 Cor 8:2 2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. (KJV)*

Just as Plato had written that we now only see reality *"through a glass dimly"* (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250 b) so Paul writes, *1 Cor 13:12 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (KJV)*

This famous passage from Paul has also been translated:

*At present all we see is the baffling reflection of reality; we are like men looking at a landscape in a small mirror. The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face* (Phillips translation quoted in F.C. Happold, *Mysticism*, 1963, p. 194).

**This translation clearly brings out the Platonic nature of Paul's teachings.** Plato had used the image of prisoners trapped in a cave who are only able to see the shadows of the outside world cast on the cave walls as an allegory for our present condition of mistaking for real what is in fact only a reflection of ultimate reality (Plato, *The Republic*, Book 7). For Plato, as for Paul, **"At present all we see is the baffling reflection of reality."**

Plato teaches that philosophers are those who are released from the cave to go outside and see the reality of the dazzling light of day for themselves - "face to face." **This phrase is a ritual formula of the Pagan Mysteries.** In *The Bacchae* we read: "He gave these Mysteries to me *face to face*." (Euripides, *The Bacchae*, 207, line 501). Lucius Apuleius writes of his initiation: "I penetrated into the very presence of the gods below and the gods above, where I worshiped *face to face*." (quoted in S. Angus, *Mystery Religions*, 1925, p.61). Justin Martyr acknowledges that: "The aim of Platonism is to see God *face to face* (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, 2.3, quoted in E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 249). Plato describes how in the temple of the "true earth," which exists in the realm of ideas of which this Earth is a mere image, "Communion with the gods occurs *face to face*" (Plato, *Phaedo*, 111c). The Gnostic Valentinus also wrote of the Logos "who spoke of realities face to face (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 299).

## THE GNOSTIC PAUL

**Paul's Christ Jesus is the mystical dying and resurrecting godman of the Gnostics, not the historical figure of the Literalists.** The only place where Paul seems to treat Jesus as a historical figure is in the Letter to Timothy, where supposedly he writes in I Tim. 6:13

*1 Tim 6:13 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; (KJV)*

**But as we have shown this this letter is a forgery.** The genuine Paul preaches the Gnostic doctrine of Illusionism, claiming that Jesus came not as a person but in the "likeness" of human flesh.

***Rom 8:3 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (KJV)***

***Phil 2:7 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** What does the word "likeness" mean when looked up in the Greek?

**Strong's Concordance** says:

3667 homoïoma (hom-oy'-o-mah); from 3666; a form; abstractly, **resemblance**: KJV-- made like to, likeness, shape, **similitude**.

**Thayer's Greek Lexicon** says:

3667 homoïoma- what has been made after the likeness of something

- a) a figure, a image, a likeness, a representation
- b) likeness that is, resemblance, such as amounts almost to equality or identity

Take just a second and ponder what you just saw from the Greek. **Without a doubt in the Greek we see what escapes us in the English; namely, that the Son of God, the Christ as we have seen, is not truly human but only a resemblance and an image and representation of mankind. This is what both Paul and Marcion believed and taught as found in the First New Testament before Rome would destroy it and replace it with their Second New Testament which alters this Christ and makes him into a human being which causes adherents of such faith idolators!**

Paul's Paul's letters are full of such distinctively Gnostic doctrines.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever stopped and wondered what Paul's famous claim to have ascended as far as the third heaven could possibly mean?

What we fail to understand today under the influence of Western literalistic Christianity is that this would not be puzzling for a Gnostic or an initiate of the Pagan Mysteries, for both would have been taught that there are seven heavens linked to the seven heavenly bodies - the five visible planets and the moon and sun. **It was obvious to Celsus that Christianity and Mithraism were teaching the same doctrine**, (R. J. Hoffman *Celsus On The True Doctrine*, 1987, p. 95). As Ulansey notes, Christianity and Mithraism were "sister religions, arising at the same time and in the same geographical area" (D. Ulansey, *Origin of Mithraic Mysteries*, 1989, p. 4). Brandon writes: ***"Paul's many references to the archontes, the stoicheia, and the pleroma all indicate his easy familiarity with esoteric concepts of a Gnostic hierarchy of supernatural powers"*** (S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion In Ancient History*, 1969, p. 44).

**Like the Gnostics, Paul is extremely disparaging of the externals of religion - ceremonies, holy days, rules, and regulations.**

***Rom 14:1-5 1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (KJV)***



*Phil 3:3 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (KJV)*

*Col 2:20-22 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? (KJV)*

**As noted, the Gnostics preached the same freedom from human legislation - especially religious laws.**

**Answer for yourself:** Could this be the reason why Paul is anti-Torah? It sure is!!!

Simon of Samaria quoted Paul in defense of his own freedom, saying, "Men are saved by grace, and not on account of their own righteous works." The followers of Carpocrates declared themselves saved "by faith and love" and considered all things "not good or evil in themselves, but only by convention," (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 44-5).

*2 Cor 3:12-18 12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (KJV)*

Like the Gnostics, he claims that true Christians become like Christ: having "no veil over the face" they "reflect as in a mirror the splendor of the Lord" and are thus "transfigured into his likeness, from splendor to splendor."

**Paul's imagery in 2 Cor. 3:12-18 is uncannily similar to the initiation rites in the Greek Mysteries.**

Novices wore veils, hence their appellation as "brides." At this stage they were known as *mystae* - those with "closed eyes." Only at the highest stage of initiation was the veil removed and the *mystae* became *epoptae* - those who had "seen." **This is the stage that Paul insists that the Corinthians should have reached.**

**The Gnostics saw Paul as a teacher of secret "Pneumatic" initiations.** In his Letter to the Romans Paul writes: "I long to see you, so that I may share with you a certain Pneumatic charisma of which he says, 'I would not have you remain ignorant.'"

*Rom 1:9-14 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren (devoid of Gnosis), that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** If Paul wants to urgently share something with his correspondents, why doesn't he write it in his letter?

**The answer for the Gnostics is that the "Pneumatic charisma" is an initiation, which he can only transmit in person and "in secret."** (Pagels, op. cit., p. 15).

Paul writes:

*1 Cor 2:9 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

**Initiated readers would undoubtedly recognize these words as a Mystery formula pronounced at the time of initiation.** As Christians devoid of knowledge of Gnosticism and the truth about Paul we read these passages never understanding that they reflect Gnosticism. The vow of secrecy undertaken by the followers of the Gnostic sage Justinus incorporated these words and, among other places, they also occur in the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, where Jesus offers:

*I will give you what eye has not seen, and what ear has not heard, what has not been touched, and what has not arisen in the heart of man.*

(Quoted in Pagels, op. cit., p. 58). Hippolytus records this as the oath of secrecy in Justinus' Gnostic group. It also occurs in *The Gospel of Thomas*, Saying 17, and in the first epistle of Clement, (A. Louth, Early Christian Writings, 1968, p. 37).

**It is only our inadequate knowledge concerning the religious beliefs associated with Gnosticism and inadequate textual translation that conceals the fact that Paul's letters are full of characteristically Gnostic phrases and teachings.** For example, the Valentinians claim that **Paul initiated Christians into the "Mystery of Sophia,"** which probably included the myth of the goddess' fall and redemption, and quote as proof his First Letter to the Corinthians, in which Paul writes: **"We speak of Sophia among the initiated."**

*1 Cor 2:6-9 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (KJV)*

If you are wondering why you have never come across this decidedly Gnostic line of Paul's before, it is because it is usually translated as "We speak wisdom among the perfected," which doesn't make a lot of sense but at least sounds orthodox!

*Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

This translation, if intelligible at all, distorts Paul's actual meaning considerably. One modern scholar explains:

**The proper meaning of this passage is obscured at two crucial points.**

- **The Greek word translated "world" here, severally in its singular or plural forms, is *aion*, which does not mean this physical world or earth, but "time" or "age."** Paul's use of *aion* here



accordingly shows that he was thinking in terms of an esoteric system of "world-ages."

- Next, the words translated as "rulers of this world" (archontes tou aionos toutou) do not refer, as is popularly supposed, to the Roman and Jewish authorities who were responsible for condemning Jesus to death; they denote demonic beings, who were associated with the planets and were believed to govern the lives of men on earth. This is very important in our understanding of the later death of "the Christ."

In this passage, then, Paul is found explaining that, before the beginning of a series of world-ages, God determined to send into the world, for the good of mankind, a preexistent divine being, whom the demonic rulers of the world, not perceiving his real nature, put to death and thereby in some way confounded themselves. In brief, Paul envisaged mankind as enslaved by demonic beings, connected with astral phenomena, whom he describes by a variety of terms such as *archontes tou aionos toutou* and *stoicheia tou kosmou* ("The elemental powers of the universe"). From this mortal slavery mankind had, accordingly, been rescued by the divine being, who, **incarnated in the LIKENESS of a person named Christ Jesus**, had been crucified mistakenly by these *archontes* who, presumably, by thus unwittingly exceeding their rights, forfeited their control over men (S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion In Ancient History*, 1969, p. 327).

*1 Pet 1:20 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (KJV)*

**This is not Christianity as we know it today! Paul is preaching Gnosticism. Paul writes of a Gnosis which can be taught only to the "fully initiated."**

He offers a prayer "that your love may more and more be bursting with Gnosis."

*Phil 1:9 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge (Gnosis) and in all judgment; (KJV)*

In 1 Corinthians Paul seems to diminish the importance of Gnosis, claiming, "Gnosis puffs up." But Clement explains that this is not to be understood as "swollen up," but means in fact "to entertain great and true sentiments," (Clement, *Stromata*, 68). **To the Gnostics, including Clement, the Gnosis was the Pneumatic initiation of the holy breath or spirit.**

He writes of "Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of Sophia and Gnosis" and of "the Gnosis of God's Mystery."

*Col 2:3 3 In whom (the Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom (Gnosis) and knowledge. (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic initiate Paul claims: "By revelation the Mystery was made known to me.

*Eph 3:3 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic defending the secrecy of the Inner Mysteries he asserts that he has heard "ineffable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

*2 Cor 12:4 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (KJV)*

Like a Gnostic he puts the emphasis on understanding, not on dogma, writing, "The letter kills, while the spirit gives life."

*2 Cor 3:6 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the*

*spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (KJV)*

And like a Gnostic, he describes stories in the scriptures as "allegories".

*Eph 4:24 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

And like a Gnostic, he writes of "events" as "symbolic."

*1 Cor 10:6 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (KJV)*

The evidence keeps mounting. Paul is Gnostic and is not teaching a human Christ Jesus but rather a Gnostic Christ mediator in the Spirit realm. That is why the Gnostic Marcion who gave us the First New Testament claimed that only Paul understood "the Christ" and his message correctly. Take a second and consider this: The seven authentic epistles of Paul do not teach a human Christ Jesus. That means the passages that you have read your whole life about "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" in the Pauline epistles NEVER were meant to refer to a human being named Jesus of Nazareth!

**Answer for yourself:** Did you understand?

This just shows us how inept we are at interpreting the religious literature we possess and cherish. It also shows us how unprepared are our spiritual authorities, preachers, and pastors are who are given the responsibility of teaching us about God. I used be one and it was during my time in Seminary that I realized that something terribly was wrong with what I am being taught. I used to call it "swiss cheese theology" as it was full of holes. It would take me many years to plumb the depths of this religious source we call the Holy Bible and little was I prepared for what I would uncover in scholarly study. Yet I was reassured at the same time that with every lie and falsehood exposed and replaced with the original truth that I would be taking a step closer to the God of truth.

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## WAS PAUL A GNOSTIC? #4

### APOSTLE OF THE RESURRECTION

Literalist Christians tried to quote Paul to endorse their bizarre belief that at the Second Coming the dead would actually rise from their graves in their physical bodies. (G. Ludemann, *Heretics*, 1995, p. 26). The Literalists Irenaeus and Tertullian both preached the resurrection of the flesh. They did this by a devious exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15, which nonetheless failed to overcome the problem of Paul's categorical denial of this doctrine in 1 Corinthians 15:50.

*1 Cor 15:50 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (KJV)*

It is clear, however, that Paul had a very different perspective. In common with the Gnostics, Paul sees the resurrection as a spiritual event. He writes categorically that *"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."* Rarely do we stop and ponder just what this verse implies. Irenaeus was evidently frustrated about this verse and complained, "All heretics (Gnostics) always introduce this passage" (E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul*, 1975, p. 85). To counter the Gnostic disciples of Paul, someone in the second century wrote 3 Corinthians to cast doubt on 1 Corinthians (F.L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary Of The Christian Church*, 1958, p. 1031). This states: "As for those who tell you that there is no resurrection of the flesh, for them there will be no resurrection (3 Corinthians v 24) We see the same testimony in Ludemann, op. cit., p. 224. The triumph of the Literalists in the fourth century rendered 3 Corinthians unnecessary and the forged text was excluded from the canon.

The Gnostic sage Theodotus calls Paul "the apostle of the resurrection" (Pagels, op. cit., 5, 14). Like the Gnostics, Paul does not see the resurrection as a promised future event, but as a spiritual experience that can happen right now. He writes, "This is it: the duly appointed time! This is it : the day of salvation"

*2 Cor 6:2 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) (KJV)*

Paul's message is clearly mystical and allegorical - he writes of being "raised up to heaven" and "enthroned with Jesus" not as some hoped - for afterlife reward, but as something, which he and other Christian initiates have already experienced.

*Eph 2:4-7 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ*

## *Jesus. (KJV)*

**This is the Gnostic Salvation Message. The writer is speaking about something already accomplished for mankind by God and available to them in the present time.** Like the Gnostics, Paul preaches that Christ Jesus' passion is not an event in the past, but a enduring mystical reality. Through sharing in Jesus' death and resurrection each Christian initiate can themselves die to their lower self and be resurrected as the Christ or Logos (W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, 1899, p. 64).

*Rom 6:4 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (KJV)*

*Rom 8:11 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (KJV)*

Inge notes: "Paul's mystical language about death and resurrection has given rise to much controversy."

In his Letter to the Philippians Paul writes of "participating in his suffering" and "sharing in the form of his death," and so being "resurrected from the dead."

*Phil 3:10-11 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Galatians he writes:

*Gal 2:20 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)*

**In his Letter to the Romans he interprets Jesus' passion allegorically,** writing:

*Rom 6:3-7 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. (KJV)*

J. Campbell, Papers From The Eranos Yearbooks, 1955, p. 238 states: "It lies in the nature of the mystery cult that the mystae undergo the same experience as their god, that, as St. Paul says, they die with him, are buried with him, are reborn with him, and are resurrected with him."

In his Letter to the Colossians Paul describes himself as having been assigned by God the task of delivering his message "in full"; of announcing "the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations," which is now being disclosed to those chosen by God.

**Answer for yourself:** And what is this great secret?

**Answer for yourself:** Is it, as we might expect from an orthodox apostle, the "good news" that Jesus had literally come and walked the Earth, worked miracles, died for our sins, and returned from the dead? No! It is the perennial mysticism of Gnosticism and the Pagan Mysteries - that within each one of us is the one Soul of



the Universe, the Logos, the Universal Daemon, the Mind of God. the Christ (T. Freke and P. Gandy, The Jesus Mysteries, 1999, p. 166-167).

Paul writes:

### The secret is this: Christ in you!

*Col 1:25-28 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

When Paul describes his famous vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus it is significant what Paul does not say. Let us look at the verse very closely:

*Gal 1:15-16 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (KJV)*

Notice that Paul doesn't say "God revealed his Son to me," as we would expect from a Literalist Christian. Rather, he writes, "God revealed his Son in me."

Paul's Jesus is not a historical figure, but a symbol of the Universal Daemon of whom we are all limbs. For Paul, "Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are together make up one body."

*1 Cor 12:12 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (KJV)*

*Rom 12:4 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Ephesians he teaches:

*Eph 4:25 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** But what do we do with a flesh and blood Jesus?

In earlier articles we made mention of the "Outer Mysteries" and the "Inner Mysteries". The Gnostics claimed that Paul taught that seeing Jesus as a flesh and blood man was only a transitory stage for beginners - the Outer Mysteries for Psychic Christians. Those Pneumatic Christians initiated into the Inner Mysteries understood the Jesus story's allegorical meaning. The Gnostics claimed that this change of perspective from a "physical" Christ Jesus to a "spiritual" Christ Jesus through initiation into the Inner Mysteries is what Paul was referring to when he wrote:

*2 Cor 5:16 16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. (KJV)*

W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, 1899, p. 69, states that the heretics (Gnostic Christians) claimed that the

**stage of worshipping the man Christ Jesus was a stage to be passed through and then left behind as one matured spiritually by ascending from the Outer Mysteries into the Inner Mysteries.**

**Answer for yourself:** Can you find one place where Paul in his original and authentic epistles spoke of a historical Jesus? No! As stated in an earlier article it is "ONLY" in the forged Pastoral Epistles where we find Paul speaking of a supposed historical Christ Jesus.

**Since Paul never claimed to have known a historical Jesus "in the flesh," it is indeed difficult to see what else he could have meant!**

## PSYCHIC AND PNEUMATIC TEACHINGS

**Answer for yourself:** So how could Paul have come to be both the hero of the "allegorical" Gnostics and the Literalists Roman Catholics?

**As we saw above the Gnostics taught that the Jesus story works on two levels at once:**

- **Christ Jesus was taught as an introductory story for Psychic Christians initiated into the Outer Mysteries**
- **Christ Jesus was taught later to initiates as a mystical allegory for Pneumatic Christians initiated into the Inner Mysteries.**

The irony of this is opposite of what we expect today; namely that the "literal" is the true and the "allegorical" is the untrue. Just the opposite is the case here. It is the "allegorical" Christ that is real and the "literal" Christ Jesus as a human being is the myth. There is no explicit evidence for the existence for a historical Jesus outside this one book given to us by the "literalist" Roman Church...the New Testament which they themselves produced as a refutation of the earlier Gnostic First New Testament of Marcion. Although it was understood in two completely different ways, the story remained the same. **According to the Gnostics, Paul's letters were likewise designed to work on two levels. As the Gnostic sage Theodotus puts it, Paul "taught in two ways at once."** (Quoted in E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Christ*, 1975, p. 7). Theodotus claims that Paul recognized that "each one knows the Lord in his own way: and not all know him alike." (Ibid., p. 5). **So on the one hand Paul preached the savior "according to the flesh" as one "who was born and suffered." This was an a "literal" introduction to carnal believers in preparation for their spiritual transformation and resurrection as they were initiated to the Inner Mystery of "Christ in you"! This "kerygmatic gospel" of "Christ crucified" he taught to Psychic Christians "because this they were capable of knowing."** But to Pneumatic Christians he proclaimed Christ "pneumatically" or "according to the spirit." Each level of initiate would take from these teachings whatever they were wise enough to be able to hear. Paul himself writes:

**1 Cor 2:14-15 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. (KJV)**

Let us re-word this verse a little:

**The Psychic does not receive the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness to him; he cannot recognize them, because they are Pneumatically discerned, but the Pneumatic discerns all things.**

The Gnostics claimed that like the gospel parables, Paul's letters encoded secret teachings so that uninitiated readers would hear one thing and the initiated another. Only those who had been initiated into the secret oral teachings of the Inner Mysteries were capable of understanding Paul's deeper meaning. As Elaine Pagels writes,

**The Valentinians claim that most Christians make the mistake of reading the scriptures only literally.**



*They themselves, through their initiation into Gnosis, learned to read Paul's letters (as they read all the scriptures) on the symbolic level, as they say Paul intended. Only this pneumatic reading yields "the truth" instead of its mere outward "image" (Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 7).*

The followers of Valentinus systematically decoded the allegorical meaning of Paul's letters to show their hidden meaning. For example, in his letters to the Romans Paul uses a simple everyday situation - the relationship between Jews and Gentiles - as a parable for the relation between Psychic and Pneumatic Christians. An initiate of the Inner Mysteries would understand that where Paul writes "Jews" he means "Psychic Christians" and where he writes "Gentiles," he means "Pneumatic Christians". Paul calls himself "apostle to the Gentiles" in Romans 1:5 because he is a Pneumatic teacher of the Inner Mysteries. Yet he comes to teach Christians of all levels, both "the wise [Pneumatics] and to the foolish [Psychics]".

*Rom 1:14 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (KJV)*

As well as "Gentiles," the other code words used by Paul to signify "Pneumatic Christian" include "the uncircumcised," "the Greeks," "Jews inwardly," "Jews in secret," and "the true Israel." (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 7).

In a striking passage in his First Letter to the Corinthians Paul writes with disappointment of wanting to give his followers Pneumatic teachings, but finding them only to be on a "Sarkic" level of awareness (a term synonymous with "Hylic," meaning the lowest level of human awareness). So he is forced to teach his students only the most basic of Christian doctrines:

*1 Cor 3:1-3 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (KJV)*

Now let us read it again with a few choice words:

*And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to Pneumatics, but as to Sarkics, as to those uninitiated in Christ. I fed you milk, not meat, for you were not yet able to take it. Nor are you now - you are still Sarkic. For where there is strife and envy among you, are you not Sarkic.* (E. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul, 1975, p. 59).

Likewise in his Letter to the Hebrews 5:11-14, Paul is impatient that his followers are still not ready to move on from elementary teachings. He writes:

*Heb 5:11-14 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (KJV)* (E. Pagels, op. cit., 148-9).

Paul is impatient that his followers are still not ready to move on from elementary teachings. In his Letter to the Hebrews he writes:

*Heb 6:1-6 1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the*

*doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word [LOGOS/CHRIST] of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance...(KJV)*

The "elementary doctrine," which Paul wants his disciples to leave behind, as a Gnostic would expect, includes repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

**Answer for yourself:** What do all of these have in common? All of these involve rituals and dogmas so precious to the Literalist Church but which Gnostics did not esteem. To the Gnostics these were only the Psychic Outer Mysteries of Christianity. Paul wants his disciples, having tasted the holy breath of Pneumatic initiation, to progress to the Pneumatic level of understanding completely and leave behind such Psychic concerns.

## PAUL AND JEHOVAH AND THE TORAH/LAW

Like the Gnostics, Paul teaches that the Mysteries of Jesus supersede the Law of the Jewish god Jehovah.

In Galatians 3:2-3 Paul asks:

*Gal 3:2-3 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (KJV)*

Paul's Gnostic Christ Jesus has given Jews a New Covenant or agreement with God and Paul does not hide his low opinion of the redundant old agreement that is traditional Judaism!" He writes:

*Phil 3:5-6 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. (KJV)*

Paul gives a full account of his justification according to Jewish Law - - circumcised on the eighth day, Israelite by race, of the tribe of Benjamin, and a zealous Pharisee - "by the law's standard righteous without fault." Startlingly, he says in verse 8 that he counts all this as "so much rubbish."

*Heb 8:13 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (KJV)*

Like the Gnostics, Paul does not preach moral servitude to the Law, but spiritual freedom through Gnosis. He declares:

*2 Cor 3:17 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (KJV)*

For Paul, "Nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom. 14:1-15). Later Gnostics, such as Carpocrates, quote Paul to defend their own doctrines of natural morality against those who accused them of immorality. After all, it was Paul, not some "loony" Gnostic heretic, who had famously proclaimed: "All things are authorized for me!"

*1 Cor 6:12 12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (KJV)*



Paul even goes so far as to declare Jehovah's traditionally sacred Law, the very basis of the Jewish religion, to be a curse, writing, *"All who depend upon works of the Law are under a curse" (Gal. 3:6-11)* and *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law" (Gal. 3:13-14)*. For Paul, as for the Gnostics, through sharing in Christ's suffering and resurrection the Christian initiate can be redeemed from the Law and set free: *"Now, having died, we are out of the purview of the Law that kept us down" (Rom. 7:6)*.

*Rom 7:6 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (KJV)*

Paul claims the Law is the product of the "mediator."

**Answer for yourself:** What does he mean by calling Jehovah, supposedly the one God and creator of all, a "mediator?" A mediator between what and what?

Literalists have no answer, but Gnostics immediately recognize that Paul is teaching the Gnostic doctrine that Jehovah is the "demiurge," a lesser god who mediates between the ineffable supreme God and creation. Paul certainly does not regard Jehovah as the true God, for he continues: "The mediator is not one; God is one" (E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul*, 1975, p. 107-108).

*Gal 3:19-20 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (KJV)*

According to Paul, people who do not understand the gospel he is preaching have had their "unbelieving minds blinded by the god of this passing age".

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

In many translations of his letters, the editor adds a helpful little note here to explain the mysterious phrase "the god of this passing age." The general orthodox gloss on this line is that Paul is referring to the Devil, but why he should refer to a wicked angel as a "god" is left unexplained! To the Gnostics it was obvious what Paul meant. He was referring to Jehovah, the lesser god of the Jews, whose years of ruling the Jewish people were coming to an end and who was to be abandoned in favor of the true ineffable God of Jesus and Plato.

## CIRCUMCISION

The anti-Gnostic letters of Paul have been found to be forgeries, but his authentic letters do oppose others within the early Christian Church who preach "another Jesus."

*2 Cor 11:4 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (KJV)*

These are not Gnostic heretics, however, but pro-Jewish Christians who believe that the Church should maintain the old Jewish custom of circumcision and honor the Law of Jehovah.

Paul attacks them with passion. In his Letter to the Philippians he warns:

*Phil 3:2 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. (KJV)*

In his Letter to the Galatians he proclaims:

*Gal 5:2 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (KJV)*

Paul goes on to say:

*Gal 5:12 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. (KJV)*

It is not such outer Psychic observances of religious rituals, but inner Pneumatic qualities, which mark the Mysteries Paul is preaching. He claims:

*Phil 3:3 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (KJV)*

Let us again reword this with different words:

*We are the circumcised, we whose worship is Pneumatic (spiritual), whose pride is in Jesus Christ, and who put no confidence in anything external.*

Paul's teachings here are completely in line with those of the Gnostic Jesus. In *The Gospel of Thomas*, for example, when the disciples ask Jesus about the benefits of circumcision, he explains:

If it were beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. Rather the true circumcision in spirit has become completely profitable (quoted in J.M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 1978, p. 132, sayubg 53).

What characterizes Paul's rival Christians is not their Gnosticism as opposed to Paul's Literalism, or their Literalism as opposed to Paul's Gnosticism. This is not the issue at all. Their disagreement is over the relationship between Christians and old Jewish traditions, and whether Christianity should be open to non-Jews, and if so in what way. The battles in the Church of Paul's time were not between Literalists and Gnostics, but between Christians with different views on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.

Paul's letters suggest that these more traditional Jewish-Christians live in Jerusalem. They have traditionally been taken to be Peter and others of Jesus' disciples who are mentioned in the New Testament. As we have already shown, this is actually an interpretation of the evidence based on unjustified preconceptions. Let us remember that the Book of Acts as Scholars attest today was a late second century document that appeared after Irenaeus in 180 C.E. Let us not forget who has control of writing these documents at this time; namely anti-Gnostic literalists. Having said that then understand that there is absolutely no evidence to support the idea that there ever existed a Jerusalem Church of the apostles as envisaged by traditional Roman Christianity. In fact, quite the opposite is true. (S.G.F. Brandon, *Religion In Ancient History*, 1969, p. 268). Indeed, when in 160 C.E. Bishop Melito of Sardis went to Judea to discover what had become of the legendary Jerusalem Church, to his dismay he found not the descendants of the apostles, but instead a small group of Gnostics! (G. Ludemann, *Heretics*, 1995), p. 31). Apparently this group of apostates was all that was left of the Jerusalem Church that God had so carefully preserved from destruction in 70 CE. Irenaeus leaves us in no doubt that the Ebionites were Gnostics (G. Ludemann, *Heretics*, 1995, p. 247, note 111). Epiphanius tells us that the Ebionites were vegetarians (W. Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, 1984, p. 203). This was a practice almost universally associated with Pythagoreanism in the ancient world. These Christians, who called themselves the Ebionites or "Poor Men," had their own *Gospel of the Ebionites* and also a *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, and a *Gospel of the Nazarenes*" (G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 1906, p. 129). All of these gospels differed significantly from the gospels of the New Testament. It should be remembered that these Nazarenes knew nothing of the Nazareth legend, which was subsequently developed by the "in order that it might be



fulfilled" school of historicizers (Ibid., 128-9). This form of Jewish-Christian Gnosticism managed to survive for many hundreds of years (Ibid., p. 126). The Nazarenes were still found scattered throughout Syria and the Decapolis in the late fourth century.

The Literalist propagandist Eusebius explains the fact that the Jerusalem Church had turned out to be made up of Gnostics by claiming that they had obviously all "apostated" from their original Literalism and become heretics - but he does not explain why or how this might have happened! Actually the evidence suggests that the Jerusalem Christians had always been Gnostics, because in the first century the Christian community was made up entirely of different types of Gnosticism!

## CONCLUSION

Answer for yourself: So was Paul a Gnostic? Let's review a little of what we have discovered:

- The Gnostics claimed that their spiritual lineage stemmed from Paul and that they were privy to secret oral teachings taught by Paul to select disciples.
- Gnostics had many gospels which they attributed to Paul, their "Great Apostle."
- Many Gnostic groups claimed Paul as their founding father.
- By the middle of the second century the communities to which Paul had written his letters are known to have been centers of Marcionite Gnosticism.
- Paul's anti-Gnostic Pastoral letters are fakes, forged in the late second century. In the genuine letters Paul is not anti-Gnostic and never mentions a historical Jesus.
- Literalist Christians of the early second century attack Paul, who they claim "contradicts" the true teaching and is the "adversary" of Jesus.
- Paul was born in Tarsus, a major center for the Pagan Mysteries, and often uses terms from the Mysteries in his letters. He even calls himself a "Steward of the Mysteries of God," the term for a priest in the Pagan Mysteries of Serapis. Paul quotes Pagan sages and teaches Pagan doctrines.
- When properly translated, Paul's letters reveal a powerful Gnostic content. Paul regularly uses Gnostic terms. He is a teacher of a Pneumatic initiation. He journeyed mystically to the third heaven. He teaches that Jesus came only in the "likeness" of flesh. He is disparaging of external religion. He describes the scriptures as "allegories" and "symbolic." He rejects the Law of Jehovah, who he calls "the mediator" and "the god of this passing age."
- While the Literalists saw the resurrection as the promise that they would rise from their graves and experience bodily immortality after the Second Coming, Paul teaches the Gnostic doctrine that the resurrection is a mystical experience that can be had here and now.
- The great secret that Paul claims to be able to reveal is not that Jesus literally walked the Earth, but the mystical revelation of "Christ in you."
- The Gnostics claimed that, like the gospels, Paul's letters encoded secret teachings. Paul taught in "two ways at once": the Outer Mysteries to Psychic initiates and the Inner Mysteries to Pneumatic initiates. Paul's letters can be understood in different ways because they were designed to speak on different levels simultaneously.
- Paul is frustrated with his disciples because they are not ready to abandon "elementary" Christianity and move on to the deeper level.

All of the evidence strongly suggests that Paul was indeed a Gnostic just as the Gnostics themselves had claimed all along (see T. Freke and P. Gandy's book: Jesus and the Lost Goddess). Yet, upon reflection we felt that to call Paul a Gnostic was, in a sense, misleading. The more one looks at the evidence the more it seemed that to apply the terms "Gnostic" and "Literalist" to the Christianity of the first century was actually meaningless. From Paul's letters it is clear that the Christian community of this period was deeply divided, yet this schism was not between Gnostics and Literalists, as was the case by the end of the

**second century.** Paul is neither anti-Gnostic nor pro-Gnostic, because in his day the great schism between Gnostics and Literalists had yet to occur.

**At the time of Paul, the strands of thought that would become Gnosticism and Literalism were harmoniously co-existing as the Inner and Outer teachings of the Jesus Mysteries.** The theological battle that Paul is engaged in is between those initiates of the Jesus Mysteries who want to maintain a traditional and distinctively Jewish identity and those, like himself, who wish to make their new Mysteries completely "modern" and cosmopolitan.

**Paul has all the characteristics we would expect to find in an initiator of the Jesus Mysteries.** When something is true then "everything" starts to fall into place. We see that repeatedly in these articles. The picture presented of the origins of Christianity explains the evidence, is internally consistent and beautifully simple once you understand Gnosticism and can differentiate between what writings are authentically Pauline and which ones were later anti-Gnostic forgeries in Paul's name.

*Now...you should not doubt as to the truth about the authentic Paul being a Gnostic and not a "literalist" as he is made out to be by Irenaeus and other proto-Catholic "literalist" which take the Gnostic New Testament and corrupt it beyond belief and later present the world with a book full of "lies" that render us who learn to cherish such false concepts idolators.*





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## THE PAULINE EPISTLES & HIS CHRIST

Of the fourteen epistles ascribed to Paul, seven -- Ephesians, Colossians, Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews -- are conceded by nearly all critics to be spurious while three others -- Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon -- are generally classed as doubtful.

The general verdict concerning the first seven is thus expressed by the Rev. Dr. Hooykaas: "Fourteen epistles are said to be Paul's; but we must at once strike off one, namely, that to the Hebrews, which does not bear his name at all.... The two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus were certainly composed long after the death of Paul.... It is more than possible that the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians are also unauthentic, and the same suspicion rests, perhaps, on the first, but certainly on the second of the Epistles to the Thessalonians" (*Bible for Learners*, Vol. III, p. 23).

The author of Second Thessalonians, whose epistle is a self-evident forgery, declares First Thessalonians to be a forgery. Baur and the Tübingen school reject both Epistles. Baur also rejects Philippians: "The Epistles to the Colossians and to the Philippians ... are spurious, and were written by the Catholic school near the end of the second century, to heal the strife between the Jew and the Gentile factions" (*Paulus*). Dr. Kuenen and the other Dutch critics admit that Philippians and Philemon, as well as First Thessalonians, are doubtful.

That the Pastoral Epistles are forgeries is now conceded by all critics. According to the German critics they belong to the second century. Hebrews does not purport to be a Pauline document. Luther says: "The Epistle to the Hebrews is not by St. Paul, or, indeed, by any apostle" (Standing Preface to Luther's N.T.).

Four Epistles -- Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians -- while rejected by a few critics, are generally admitted to be the genuine writings of Paul. These books were written, it is claimed, about a quarter of a century after the death of Christ. They are the only books of the New Testament whose authenticity can be maintained.

Admitting the authenticity of these books, however, is not admitting the historical existence of Christ and the divine origin of Christianity. Paul was not a witness of the alleged events upon which Christianity rests. He did not become a convert to Christianity until many years after the death of Christ. He did not see Christ (save in a vision); he did not listen to his teachings; he did not learn from his disciples. *"The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it"* (Gal. 1, II, 12). Paul accepted only to a very small extent the religion of Christ's disciples. He professed to derive his knowledge from supernatural sources -- from trances and visions. Regarding the value of such testimony the author of *Supernatural Religion* (p. 970) says: "No one can deny, and medical and psychological annals prove, that many men have been subject to visions and hallucinations which have never been seriously attributed to supernatural causes. There is not one single valid reason removing the ecstatic visions and trances of the Apostle Paul from this class."

The corporeal existence of the Christ of the Evangelists receives slight confirmation in the writings of Paul. His Christ was not the incarnate Word of John, nor the demi-god of Matthew and Luke. Of the immaculate conception of Jesus he knew nothing. To Him Christ was the son of God in a spiritual rather than in a physical sense. "His son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to

the flesh; and declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3, 4). "God sent forth his son, made of a woman [but not of a virgin], made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

With the Evangelists the proofs of Christ's divinity are his miracles. Their books teem with accounts of these. But Paul evidently knows nothing of these miracles. With him the evidences of Christ's divine mission are his resurrection and the spiritual gifts conferred on those who accept him.

The Evangelists teach a material resurrection. When the woman visited his tomb "they entered in and found not the body of Jesus" (Luke 24:3). The divine messengers said to them, "He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:6). "He sat at meat" with his disciples; "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them" (Luke 24:30). "Then he said to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:27). **This is entirely at variance with the teachings of Paul.** "But not is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15: 20, 21). "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest thou sowest not that body that shall be" (I Cor. 15:35-37). "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:44). "Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50).

**The Christ that Paul saw in a vision was a spiritual being -- an apparition; and this appearance he considers of exactly the same character as the post mortem appearances of Christ to his disciples.**

"He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; ... after that, he was seen of James; then all of the Apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also" (I Cor. 15:5-8).





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## A QUICK PRIMER ON THE AUTHENTIC EPISTLES OF PAUL

There are seven New Testament letters that most modern scholars believe were definitely authored by Paul. Those seven letters are:

- **1 Thessalonians**
- **Galatians**
- **Philippians**
- **Philemon**
- **1 Corinthians**
- **2 Corinthians**
- **Romans | 1-15 | 16**

(The 16th chapter of "Romans" was actually written to the church in Ephesus, but it is part of Romans in the canonical New Testament letters.)

Of the fourteen epistles ascribed to Paul, seven -- Ephesians, Colossians, Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews -- are conceded by nearly all critics to be spurious while three others -- Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon -- are often debated and by some generally classed as doubtful.

Many theologians believe that there is some material embedded in some of Paul's epistles that is actually much more recent material from other Christian sources - e.g. hymns, creedal formulas, confessions of faith. They seem to date from as late as the middle of the second century CE, some 85 years after Paul's death.

A.Q. Morton completed an analysis of these Epistles (S.M. Gilmour, "The Letters of Paul," essay in C.M. Laymon: "The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible," Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN (1991). He assumed that Galatians was written by Paul, and did a computer study of the style of the remaining letters using that epistle as a reference. His computer found that only Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Philemon matched the precise writing style of the author of Galatians. He assumed that the remaining 8 were written in the name of Paul by persons unknown.

The general verdict concerning the first seven is thus expressed by the Rev. Dr. Hooykaas: *"Fourteen epistles are said to be Paul's; but we must at once strike off one, namely, that to the Hebrews, which does not bear his name at all.... The two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus were certainly composed long after the death of Paul.... It is more than possible that the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians are also unauthentic, and the same suspicion rests, perhaps, on the first, but certainly on the second of the Epistles to the Thessalonians"* (Bible for Learners, Vol. III, p. 23).

The author of Second Thessalonians, whose epistle is a self-evident forgery, declares First Thessalonians to be a forgery. Baur and the Tübingen school reject both Epistles. Baur also rejects Philippians: *"The Epistles to the Colossians and to the Philippians ... are spurious, and were written by the Catholic school near the*

*end of the second century, to heal the strife between the Jew and the Gentile factions" (Paulus). Dr. Kuenen and the other Dutch critics admit that Philipians and Philemon, as well as First Thessalonians, are doubtful.*

*That the Pastoral Epistles are forgeries is now conceded by all critics.* According to the German critics they belong to the second century. Hebrews does not purport to be a Pauline document. Luther says: *"The Epistle to the Hebrews is not by St. Paul, or, indeed, by any apostle"* (Standing Preface to Luther's N.T.).

Four Epistles -- Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians -- while rejected by a few critics, are generally admitted to be the genuine writings of Paul. These books were written, it is claimed, about a quarter of a century after the death of Christ. They are, in the minds of many Biblical scholars, the only books of the New Testament whose authenticity can be maintained.

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus were definitely pseudonymous (written by a unknown person, passing the writings off as Paul's.) They were written 35 to 85 years after Paul's death. Although such a writer would be considered a forger today, the practice was quite common in the 1st century CE, and was considered acceptable behavior.

We are often guilty of judging 1st century CE traditions by today's ethical standards. As stated in the New Jerusalem Bible: *"The best explanation may be that the Pastoral Epistles are letters written by a follower of Paul, conscious of inheriting his mantle and seeking to give advice and instruction for the administration of local churches. This adoption of a revered name in such circumstances was a literary convention of the times."*

## SO WHAT SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE UPON THE TRUE PAULINE EPISTLES?

Well there are many things.

- *First of all we should question if we should approach the New Testament with the idea that all that it is contained within it is indeed infallible and inerrant and the word of God in all places.*
- *Next we should realize the important responsibility we have to become students of the New Testament in order to gain credible knowledge of the earliest expression of Christianity and its devolution whereby we can safely read and interpret the New Testament and sift the "truth" from the "error" and replacement religion which will come later through the antisemitism and pens of the later anti-Gnostic proto-Catholics.*

In so doing we will come to see along the way as we separate out the earlier authentic Pauline epistles from the later forgeries of Pauline epistles that there are two different "Jesus" being taught in the New Testament within the supposed Paul's writings. One is the representation of Yahweh's Salvation in the form of the "allegorical Christ" within mankind to which we are to awaken unto once our "eyes are opened" through gnosis and receiving the mystical teachings from Paul and others. The other is the presentation of a historical human Jesus of the later forged Pauline writings. Over one hundred years span the difference in time between the earlier presentation of Paul's "hidden Christ within" and the presentation of the "gnostic Christ" of the authentic Epistles of Paul written in the 50-60s C.E.

Admitting the authenticity of these books, however, is not admitting the historical existence of Christ and the divine origin of Christianity as it exists today. Let us never forget that Paul was not a witness of the alleged events upon which Christianity rests. He did not become a convert to Christianity until many years after the death of Christ. He did not see Christ (save in a vision); he did not listen to his teachings; he did not learn from his disciples and in fact refused to go to them for 14 years or more.

*Gal 1:11-12 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*



***12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (KJV).***

Paul accepted only to a very small extent the religion of Christ's Jewish disciples. As shown on an earlier article and on our Pauline website this is not strange once you come to realize that Paul was a Gentile who converted to Judaism and at the same time let us understand that the Messiah of Israel comes for the Jews and not the Gentiles. Thus Paul would not have been interested in the human seed of David that was hoped for by Israel as their physical deliverance from Gentile domination. **Instead Paul professed to derive his knowledge from supernatural sources -- from trances and visions.** Regarding the value of such testimony the author of *Supernatural Religion* (p. 970) says: ***"No one can deny, and medical and psychological annals prove, that many men have been subject to visions and hallucinations which have never been seriously attributed to supernatural causes. There is not one single valid reason removing the ecstatic visions and trances of the Apostle Paul from this class."***

The corporeal and historical existence of the "fleshly" Christ of the writings of the later New Testament proto-Catholic "Evangelists" receives no confirmation in the earlier authentic writings of Paul. **His Christ was not the incarnate Word of John, nor the demi-god of Matthew and Luke. Of the immaculate conception of Jesus and the supposed virgin birth Paul knew nothing and mentions nothing. No infancy stories or trip to Egypt are mentioned. There are not birth narratives alluded to by Paul at all. Not one mention from the earlier authentic Pauline Epistles is any reference to the human genealogy of Jesus. To Him Christ was the son of God in a spiritual rather than in a physical sense.** This makes perfect sense once we realize that Paul was a Gnostic Christian.

With the Evangelists the proofs of Christ's divinity are his miracles. Their books teem with accounts of these. But Paul evidently knows nothing of these miracles because he mentions none of them. With him the evidences of Christ's divine mission are his resurrection and the spiritual gifts conferred on those who accept him and who awaken to "the Christ" within.

The Evangelists teach a material resurrection but contrary to what you might assume Paul did not. Paul's resurrection was not a physical but rather a spiritual resurrection within the soul of mankind. Speaking to people who obviously were not dead Paul says:

***Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)***

When the woman visited his tomb "they entered in and found not the body of Jesus" (Luke 24:3). The divine messengers said to the in verse 6, "He is not here, but is risen". "He sat at meat" with his disciples; "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them" (verse 30). "Then he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:27). **This is entirely at variance with the teachings of Paul.** "But not is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:20, 21). "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest thou sowest not that body that shall be" (35-37).

***"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (44).***

***"Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (50).***

**Answer for yourself:** Now does that sound like a physical resurrection to you in the **pattern** of a supposed physical resurrection of a prior Christ Jesus?

The Christ that Paul saw in a vision was a spiritual being -- an apparition; and this appearance he considers of exactly the same character as the post mortem appearances of Christ to his disciples. *"He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; ... after that, he was seen of James; then all of the Apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also"* (I Cor. 15:5-8).

Let us keep in mind that Paul's biblical letters (Epistles) serve as the oldest surviving Christian texts, written probably around 60 C.E. As shown above most scholars have little reason to doubt that Paul wrote some of them himself. However, there occurs not a single instance in all of Paul's writings that he ever meets or sees an earthly Jesus, nor does he give any reference to Jesus' life on earth. Paul never mentions in his early authentic Epistles:

- **The virgin birth**
- **Any infancy narratives**
- **Any birth stories of Jesus**
- **Any genealogical reference to Jesus being from David**

Therefore, all accounts about a historical Jesus could only have come from other believers that followed Paul.

Of course one article proves nothing and that is not my intent. My intent however is to alert good people and believers in the Christ and the Jesus of the New Testament to the fact that we have serious problems and deficiencies in the New Testament that go unnoticed by almost all but few with some existing knowledge of these problems concerning the historical Jesus and who likewise possess a critical eye when reading these texts in the New Testament. It is truly foolhearty to approach the New Testament believing all things without personal study into the true origin and canonization of the New Testament.

No one has the slightest physical evidence to support a historical Jesus; no artifacts, dwelling, works of carpentry, or self-written manuscripts. All claims about a historical Jesus derive from writings of other people and let me say these writings appear "late"; often later second century. There occurs no contemporary Roman record that shows Pontius Pilate executing a man named Jesus. Devastating to historians, there occurs not a single contemporary writing that mentions Jesus. All documents about Jesus got written well after the life of the alleged Jesus from either: unknown authors, people who had never met an earthly Jesus, or from fraudulent, mythical or allegorical writings.

The most "authoritative" accounts of a historical Jesus come from the four canonical Gospels of the Bible. Note that these Gospels did not come into the Bible as original and authoritative from the authors themselves, but rather from the influence of early church fathers, especially the most influential of them all: Irenaeus of Lyon who lived in the middle of the second century. Many heretical gospels got written by that time, but Irenaeus considered only some of them for mystical reasons. He claimed only four in number; according to Romer, *"like the four zones of the world, the four winds, the four divisions of man's estate, and the four forms of the first living creatures-- the lion of Mark, the calf of Luke, the man of Matthew, the eagle of John (see Against the Heresies). The four gospels then became Church cannon for the orthodox faith. Most of the other claimed gospel writings were burned, destroyed, or lost."* [Romer]. Not only do we not know who wrote them, consider that none of the Gospels got written during the alleged life of Jesus, nor do the unknown authors make the claim to have met an earthly Jesus. Add to this that none of the original gospel manuscripts exist; we only have copies of copies.

We should take from this article again the need for serious study on our parts to come to the truth concerning just whom this "Jesus Christ" truly is that we read about in the New Testament. A few things are for certain in my opinion and this is the fact that when we separate our Paul's earlier authentic writings to the best of our abilities and read just what he says and writes concerning this earlier "Christ Jesus" and at the same time we do not read into his authentic earlier Epistles what we have been taught to believe about Jesus and what we



have been brainwashed to previously think and believe by church tradition then:

- It is impossible to find a historical Jesus Christ in the authentic Pauline Epistles
- Only when we get to the later forgeries of the Pauline Epistles written long after his death, as late as the later second century, do we find a historical Christ Jesus written in Paul's name

At this later time (180 C.E.) we find the first quotes of early Church Fathers from these supposedly existing early 4 Gospels which indicate that there were written late and not early as a refutation of the earliest Gospels of the Gnostic Christians which never taught a human Christ Jesus nor a historical Jesus Christ.

The authentic Paul and his authentic Epistles taught the non-human Divine mediator which lies sleeping within each child of God; the "Christ within" which lives within each child of God which is his link between the Spirit and material world. Paul taught this "Christ within" to which Paul was called to make known to the Gentile world which did not possess this knowledge or understanding of God and the "sleeping" God within the souls of mankind which are trapped in this material universe.

*Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

*Gal 4:19 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (KJV)*

In closing notice please where this "Christ" resides. Paul says "in you" not "out there". This is the message of the 7 authentic Epistles of Paul. Only later with the forgery of the proto-Catholics with the 4 current Gospels and the other anti-Gnostic Epistles in Paul's name and others do we find the creation of a "fleshly Christ" and a "historical Jesus".



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## DID PAUL TEACH A "HEAVENLY CHRIST" OR A "HISTORICAL JESUS"?

I noticed long ago that when reading Paul that he seems to be putting out "fires" everywhere he went. His letters and epistles are full of "stop it," "quit it," "cease," etc. Of course the Gentiles and heathen needed moral correction. Paul had problems everywhere which only he could handle. This being the case as seen from his writings the New Testament epistles can often be best described as "occasional writings" or "spur of the moment writings." That is, each one of Paul's epistles was written on a particular occasion to deal with a specific situation faced by the writer. Some of these writers, such as Paul, would not have penned their epistles themselves; they dictated them to a scribal companion or professional.

Such a letter might be hastily written and sent off overnight with little review or polishing before it was sent on its way. Yet in other New Testament letters we detect a great amount of planning and care was taken in their writing. As mentioned, a few of the New Testament epistles, such as the epistle to the Hebrews, are clearly not spur-of-the moment affairs, but carefully built and constructed little treatises. In the Pauline corpus, the epistles of Romans and Ephesians fall into such a category, possibly others. Finally, the odd epistle, notably 1 John, shows revision over time, a "layering" of later parts and insertions over earlier ones.

**Answer for yourself:** Understanding the haphazard approach to writing the bulk of the corpus of New Testament documents as we find today then what should we reasonably expect to find in such a random collection of writings?

We must begin by acknowledging first that these writers are, since writing on the spur-of-the moment **are not setting out to present a comprehensive statement of their faith and the central figure of it-although it might be argued that Hebrews does, and to a certain extent Romans.** Nevertheless, we should reasonably expect that from this collection of early Christian correspondence only **basic defining doctrines and instruction and just a general background picture of the Christian movement.**

**Answer for yourself:** Should we not expect this especially in light of the fact that these supposedly Jewish writers are writing new religious dogmas for ignorant Gentiles? Was it not expected that these new Gentile Godfearer and converts to the faith would get the real "meat" in the synagogues?

*Acts 15:19-21 19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** But what do we find when we examine these New Testament documents with a critical and informed eye?

- **We find that important fundamentals of doctrine and background, which have come to be taught as Christians today and which almost two millennia of Christian tradition would lead us**



to expect, are entirely missing in these earliest epistles. In other words they are not in-depth in teaching about Christ Jesus.

- On the other hand, the epistle writers seem to be saying things about doctrine and background which present quite a different picture than the Gospel traditions have given us.

## EXAMINING THE DOCUMENTS CLOSELY

In that portion of the New Testament following the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, there are 22 documents. Most of them were NOT written by the authors whose names they bear. Among the 13 epistles assigned to Paul, scholarly study and computer analysis have judged only seven as genuine:

- Romans,
- 1 and 2 Corinthians,
- Galatians,
- Philippians,
- 1 Thessalonians, and
- Philemon.

More radical views on the Pauline corpus regard even fewer letters as genuine, or none at all. Such an interpretation goes back to F.C. Baur and the Dutch Radical School of the 19th century, but is making a comeback in some circles today. While it is likely that liberal scholarship will eventually enlarge the extent of later editing and interpolation it would allow within some of the "genuine" letters of Paul, it is too soon to overthrow the basic reliability of the standard seven epistles. While we are at it we should mention that 2 Corinthians is an editing together of at least two separate letters, and I Corinthians may also contain splicing and editing. Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians were likely written within a decade or two after Paul's death (presumably in the 60s) by followers or members of his congregations. Their authors used Paul's name in order to give their letters greater authority. The three Pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) are also in Paul's name, but they present a picture of a later period and are assigned to the early second century, usually 110-130.

The epistle to the Hebrews is anonymous. Of those under the names of Peter, James, John and Jude, none today are judged to be authentic. That is, they were not written by those legendary followers of Jesus. These epistles too may originally have been anonymous, or had their original ascriptions dropped; new names were added, possibly at the time the epistles were collected and a canon was being formed. The term for this custom of adopting the name of a famous figure of the past to give one's writing greater authority is "pseudonymous."

Dating many of these documents is notoriously difficult, and wide latitude are allowed. Traditional scholarship has tended to date Hebrews and James early-possibly before the Jewish War of 66-70. 1 Peter and the three Johns come perhaps in the 80s or 90s. 2 Peter tends to be dated late, 100-120; this requires Jude to be earlier, since some of its passages have been inserted into 2 Peter. Finally, Revelation, written by a prophet named John who is no longer identified with the Gospel apostle of that name, is placed most often in the mid 90s. Taken as a whole, then, most of the epistolary corpus predates the Gospels; virtually all of it predates the wider dissemination of those Gospels.

All the documents of the New Testament, as well as almost all the non-canonical ones of the first two centuries, were written in Greek, the international language of the time.

## BUT SOMETHING IS MISSING...WHAT?

I learned a long time ago in my Biblical studies that we can learn just as much if not more by focusing not on what a document "says" but what it "does not say."

Those 22 documents in the latter part of the New Testament contain roughly 80,000 words. They are the product of about a dozen different writers, Paul being the most prominent. In them, one encounters over 500 references to the object of all these writers' faith: "Jesus" or "Christ" or a combination of these names, or "the Son," plus a few to "the Lord" meaning Christ.

Let me warn the reader to pay attention to what comes next and concentrate as he reads. Understand before we proceed that these epistles predate the later Gospels by over 50 to 100 years.

**Answer for yourself:** Even if these writings are "occasional"- and some of them are more than that - *is it feasible* that in all this discussion and defense of their Christian faith (80,000 words), that we can find nowhere where anyone or any writer, by choice, accident or necessity, used words which identified the "the Christ" they are all talking about with his recent "human" incarnation: whether this be the man Jesus of Nazareth known to us from the Gospels, born of Mary and died under Pilate, or some other "genuine Jesus" unearthed by modern critical scholarship"? Please read the question again and ponder it!

This "Christ" of Paul and the epistles is not connected to the "incarnation" in any way but seems to be only a "Spiritual entity." **As astonishing as such a silence may seem, an equation such as "Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God and Messiah" is missing from all the early Christian correspondence!!! The Jesus of the epistles is not spoken of as a man who had recently lived.**

And let us not forget that this is the "message" taught by the earliest Christians not only up to 55 CE with the Jerusalem Council but much beyond until we find the emergence of the Gospels some almost 30-35 years later (the Gospel of Mark being believed to be the earliest Gospel). That means that this picture of "the Christ" is the idea and message taught by the earliest Christians; that is until the later Gospels emerge which replaces "the Christ" with a human being.

## BUT WHAT ABOUT...?

There are three passages in the epistles which present apparent exceptions to what has just been said, plus a third which could be claimed to fall into such a category, and I will deal with them immediately so as not to compromise the argument.

One is **1 Thessalonians 2:15-16**. After a statement that the Thessalonian Christians have been mistreated by their fellow countrymen just as the Christians in Judea have been persecuted by their fellow Jews, we read this additional comment about those Jews:

***1Thes 2:15-16 15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.***  
(KJV)

**That last sentence is an obvious allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened after Paul's death and many years after 1 Thessalonians was written.** That means Paul could not have written this since he was killed prior to the Jewish War. The sentiments in those two verses are also very uncharacteristic of Paul's feelings towards his fellow Jews as expressed elsewhere in his letters. **For those reasons, many scholars have judged these verses to be an interpolation, something inserted into the text at a later date. This, by the way, is the only passage in the entire corpus of New Testament epistles which assigns the Jews any responsibility in the death of the Christ figure.**

The second "apparent exception" is found in **1 Timothy 6:13**, a passing reference to Christ making a confession before Pontius Pilate. First a word about the Pastoral Epistles. In recent times, however, the authenticity of



these epistles has been called in question by Schmidt, Schleiermacher, Baur, Renan, and many others. **Baur asserted that they were written for the purpose of combating the Gnosticism of the 2nd century, and of defending the church from it by means of ecclesiastical organization, and that the date of their composition was about the year 150 AD.** They were absent from the earliest First New Testament of Marcion, and him being a lover of Paul, surely would have included them if they had existed in his day. Various difficulties have been alleged against the reception of the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline. The chief of these are:

- (1) the difficulty of finding any place for these letters in the life of Paul, as that is recorded in the Acts and in the Pauline Epistles written before the Pastorals;
- (2) the fact that there are said to be in them indications of an ecclesiastical organization, and of a development of doctrine, both orthodox and heretical, considerably in advance of the Pauline age;
- (3) that the language of the epistles is, to a large extent, different from that in the accepted epistles;
- (4) the "most decisive" of all the arguments against the Pauline authorship--so writes Dr. A.C. McGiffert (A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, 402)--is that "the Christianity of the Pastoral Epistles is not the Christianity of Paul."

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus were definitely pseudonymous (written by a unknown person, passing themselves off as Paul.) They were written 35 to 85 years after Paul's death. Although such a writer would be considered a forger today, the practice was quite common in the 1st century CE, and was considered acceptable behavior (The Pauline Epistles, Copyrighted © 1995, 1996, 1997 by the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, PO Box 27026, Frontenac Post Office, Kingston ON Canada, K7M 8W5).

Now let us look at the passage in question.

*1 Tim 6:13 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; (KJV)*

While not so clear-cut a case, some commentators find that this reference does not fit well into its surrounding context, and so one can ask whether it was part of the original letter. **In any case, since this epistle comes from the early decades of the second century, the reference to Pilate, if authentic, could reflect the newly-developing view that Jesus had lived at Pilate's time and was executed by the Roman governor.**

The third passage mentioned above is the sole Gospel-like scene to be found in all of Paul's letters: **1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**

*1 Cor 11:23-26 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (KJV)*

Here Paul attributes words to Jesus at what he calls "the Lord's Supper," words identifying the bread and wine of the thanksgiving meal with Jesus' body and blood.

**Answer for yourself:** But is Paul recounting an historical event here? There are several arguments to be made that this is not the case, that **Paul is instead describing something which lay in the realm of myth, just as the cult of the savior god Mithras had a myth about the establishment of its own sacred meal.** In fact, the opening phrase of the passage points to Paul's reception of this information through revelation, not

through an account of others who were supposedly participants at such an event.

*1 Cor 11:23 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...*

Let us never forget that Paul never met a human Jesus but only knew of him through a vision and revelation. Now noticing this maybe for the first time in your life we can understand fully that these passages, due to their date and wording, do not have to be regarded as a necessary reference to an historical Jesus who had lived on earth in Paul's own lifetime.

Thus, we are left with an entire corpus of early Christian correspondence from Paul which gives us no indication that the divine "Christ" these writers look to for salvation is to be identified with the man Jesus of Nazareth whom the Gospels place in the early first century - or, indeed, with any man in their recent past.

What I will propose to reveal to you as our studies increase is the fact that many references in the epistles to the "death" or "rising" of "Christ" are not, in themselves, references to physical events on earth or in history. They, along with a handful of "human" sounding terms, are part of the myth of the Son; they relate to the activities of this divinity in the supernatural realm. In other words this is the expression as taught not by later Western Christianity but Gnostic Christianity. For all its jarring incongruity with our modern outlook, not to mention centuries of tradition about a Gospel Jesus, this is a view that would have been perfectly at home in the philosophical and mythical thinking of the time. It was, in fact, a view shared by a whole range of pagan salvation cults, each of which had its own savior god who had performed deeds in the mythical world. Once you come to understand these "myths" as allegories and not "literalism" then you will be able to understand the Divine truths that they captured and related to mankind before the emergence of Judaism and Christianity. Like Paul's Christ (understood allegorically), savior gods such as Attis and Osiris had been killed; like Paul's Christ, Osiris had been buried (after being dismembered); like Christ on the third day, Adonis and Dionysus had been resurrected from death. All these things were not regarded as historical; they had taken place in the world of myth and higher reality. You will come to see these were meant to be understood allegorically as the "rebirth and awareness within mankind of his spirit/soul within his body). Because we have been conditioned to always take thing "literally" we miss the true meanings intended by such stories used by the Pagans to express spiritual enlightenment within themselves. It all falls into place when you gather enough knowledge and understanding of what these "myths" are and how they were to be understood in the first place.

## PAUL STARTS OFF WITH HIS CHRIST IN HEAVEN ANYWAY

To get a clearer focus on what we just said, let's look at a passage from Acts, a document which many scholars now date to the second century and no longer regard as historically reliable. In Acts 2:22-36, the author puts a speech into the mouth of Peter. Here Peter says: *"Men of Israel, hear me. I speak of Jesus of Nazareth, a man singled out by God and made known to you through miracles, portents and signs. . . ."* He goes on to tell about this Jesus, concluding with these words: *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

This would surely be the most natural and inevitable way Christian discussion and preaching would proceed. The movement had supposedly begun as a response to a human man. This man had had such a profound effect on people that they forsook everything in life to preach him; for this man's sake they had abandoned, even betrayed, much that was held sacred in their Jewish heritage. He should have lain at the forefront of their minds. And so Acts would seem to indicate. In speech after speech, the Christian apostles *start* with the man Jesus and make certain factual statements and faith declarations about him.



**Answer for yourself:** But what do we find in the letters of Paul and other early writers?

**They start with the *divine* Christ (not a human man), the figure of the Son in heaven, and make their faith statements about him. And there is no equation with an historical man, a human teacher who had recently lived.**

***Paul believes in the Son of God, not that anyone was the Son of God.***

Here is Paul stating a capsule summary of the gospel of salvation he preached to the Corinthians:

*1 Cor 15:3-4 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Isn't there something missing here?

**Answer for yourself:** Lets reason together for a moment. Lets pretend Paul is coming into your city two thousand years ago and he begins to preach in the town square or the local synagogue. Would his listeners, from this account above, have known that the Christ he is speaking of was a man from Nazareth who had undergone this death and resurrection in Jerusalem only a couple of decades ago, on a hill and from a tomb just outside Jerusalem?

**Answer for yourself:** Would not an essential part of his gospel be the identity of the human incarnation of this Son of God and Christ - or even the fact of the incarnation itself?

But perhaps Paul left out such preliminaries when quoting his capsule gospel. What of his "definition" of Father and Son in 1 Corinthians 8:6

*1 Cor 8:6 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (KJV)*

This is language very reminiscent of Greek philosophy. **But it would seem that a fundamental description of the Son is not to include the fact that he was incarnated in the person of a human Jesus, the man through whom information about the Son was presumably derived. Such an idea Paul does not mention - either here or anywhere else.**

Throughout his letters, Paul has much to say about faith.

- **Faith** in Jesus as the avenue to eternal life.
- **Faith** that God has raised Jesus from the dead.
- **Faith** even in Jesus' death.
- **Faith** that God has revealed his great mystery about Christ to apostles like himself.

**But Paul leaves out what is surely the most important faith of all, the one that comes first, without which none of the others come into play. Paul ignores the requirement that one must have faith that the man Jesus had been the incarnation of the divine, redeeming Son he is preaching. This message of Paul is quite different from the presentation of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels which will come much later.** (Earl Doherty, *The Jesus Puzzle*, 1999, p. 11-22).

Some of the epistles contain descriptions of the Son which are quite fantastic. Here is part of the one in

## Colossians 1:15-20:

*Col 1:15-20 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: .....19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. (KJV)*

This is very deep for non-educated laymen and labors in Paul's day. In fact this is related to wider philosophical trends of thinking. This "Christ" is not only the reflection of God, he is the agent through whom all the heavens and the earth have been created. He holds the entire universe together!

**Answer for yourself:** But has Paul again failed to tell us something very important. Did you catch it? Where is the earthly incarnation of this "Christ" in Paul's message?

Paul, or the Pauline writer fails to mention anywhere in his letter that this colossal power had been on earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Answer for yourself:** Would not such a fantastic promotion of a crucified criminal human being to such a high cosmic a level of divinity be an important point that needed to explained to Paul's audience? Would they not wonder how a man became God?

**Answer for yourself:** Why is no justification or defense of such a cosmic exaltation of a human being NEVER offered by any epistle writer for such an unprecedented leap from the realm of "flesh" to "Spirit"?

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews also instructs us the Son (1:2-3):

*Heb 1:1-3 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Having read the book of Hebrews most likely in your life did you ever notice that there is never one reference to a human Jesus or association of a human Jesus with this Cosmic Son?

Though this author of the book of Hebrews devotes a dozen chapters to detailing the Son's redeeming activities in a heavenly sanctuary, he never identifies him with the man Jesus of Nazareth or any other human being. Though he can quote the Son's words in scripture, the "voice" through which God has spoken in the present age, he never gives his readers a single saying attributed to the Galilean preacher in the Gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not begin to appear to you that the earliest writers of the New Testament are writing about a "Christ" which is not a literal human being on this earth as we once thought?

These and similar passages in the epistles illustrate the orientation of early Christian thinking. The writer of the epistles start with the divine Christ and detail his activities. They do not start with the human man and identify their divine Christ with him, which is the approach we find in Acts and the Synoptic Gospels which came much later after these epistles and their presentation of "the Christ."



**Answer for yourself:** Then is it remotely possible that these later Gospels were written to alter the prior understanding of "the Christ" and does so by "incarnating" the "Christ" whereby he becomes no longer a Divine-Spiritual concept among and within Mankind but is not made to be a "literal" human being?

## JESUS...COULD HE BE THE CENTER OF A MYTHOLOGICAL ALLEGORY?

We have only begun to scratch the surface of this problem of the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of Faith." This preliminary dip into the early Christian view of the Son presents a picture which scholars have long found perplexing. The epistles cast Jesus in an exclusively mythological and spiritual role, while ignoring the fact or identity of his supposed incarnation which is presented in the Gospels, the man whose career on earth presumably started it all. The term "mythological" as employed in New Testament studies can have a more specific meaning than the popular sense of relating to legends or mythical stories. It may refer to features given to deities, spiritual forces, etc. which relate to their functioning in the heavenly world or in relation to other spiritual things. Here is how one scholar has put it (Herman Ridderbos, Paul and Jesus, p. 3):

*"No one who examines the Gospels, and then reads the epistles of Paul can escape the impression that he is moving in two entirely different spheres. . . . When Paul writes of Jesus as the Christ, historical and human traits appear to be obscure, and Christ appears to have significance only as a transcendent divine being."*

But the question which mainstream New Testament scholarship has never asked is in fact the most natural one of all: suppose Paul made no such leap?

**Answer for yourself:** Upon intense scrutiny of Paul's presentation of Christ where we find only this transcendent divine being, whose activities are never linked to history or an earthly location, is there any justification for assuming that Paul's Christ arose out of Jesus of Nazareth, out of the human figure who appears for the first time only in Gospels that were written some time after Paul?

Those who derive their view of Jesus (Joshua-Jesus) from the Gospels might be startled to realize the highly elevated nature of the Jesus preached by early Christians. He is a part of the very Godhead itself. His nature is integral with that of the Father. And he has been given all the titles previously reserved in Jewish thought for God alone. This Jesus is pre-existent: that is, he existed before all time with the Father, before the very creation of the world. Indeed, it is through him that the world has been created, and he is the energy force through which the workings of the universe are maintained. In addition, he serves as God's redeeming agent in the divine salvation plan for humankind, reconciling an estranged universe to God (Colossians 1:20). He is the unifying force of the entire cosmos (Ephesians 1:10). He has subjugated the demon spirits who pervade the world and harass humanity, and he has been given lordship over all earthly and supernatural powers.

This supposed elevation of a human man is quite staggering. To the extent that they are familiar with them, Christians have had almost 2000 years to get used to such lofty ideas. But we lose sight of the fact that if the orthodox picture is true, someone or some group one day decided to apply all these ideas to a human being for the first time and actually went out and preached them.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it possible to conceive of circumstances in which followers of such a man, a humble preacher whose deeds - critical scholars are now agreed - could not possibly have matched those of the Gospel story, would have elevated him to such a cosmic level?

Though men, such as the Roman emperors, could be called divine and "sons of God," Jesus' degree of elevation would have been virtually unprecedented in the entire history of religion (from a criminal to Divine). That might sound feasible but let me remind you that this is especially inconceivable among Jews. The Jewish mind had an obsession against associating anything human with God. He could not be

**represented by even the suggestion of a human image.** Jews in their thousands had bared their necks before Pilate's swords simply to protest against the carrying of Roman military standards bearing human images into the city of Jerusalem. The idea that a man was a literal part of God would have been met by almost any Jew with abhorrence and horror. Biblical anthropomorphisms (human images applied to God) have been rooted out by writers such as Philo of Alexandria and the translators of the Targums (versions of the Bible in Aramaic) because it was regarded as unseemly to represent God as possessing human attributes. James Dunn, in his Parting of the Ways, p. 188, states that Paul shows not the slightest discomfort in applying to Jesus passages from the Hebrew Scriptures which originally referred to God. The hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 is a clear echo, he says, of Isaiah 45:23, which is "one of the strongest assertions of Jewish monotheism in the whole of the Scriptures." He goes on to declare: "That a Jew should use such a text of a man who recently lived in Palestine is truly amazing." (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 11-22).

Yet we are to believe not only that Jews were led to identify a crucified criminal with the ancient God of Abraham, but that they went about the empire and practically overnight converted huge numbers of other Jews to the same outrageous - and thoroughly blasphemous - proposition.

**Answer for yourself:** What is wrong with that picture now understanding that these are strict monotheists?

Within a handful of years of Jesus' supposed death, we know of Christian communities in many major cities of the empire, all presumably having accepted that a man they had never met, crucified as a political rebel on a hill outside Jerusalem, had risen from the dead and was in fact the Son of God and redeemer of the world.

Since many of the Christian communities Paul worked in existed before he got there, and since his letters do not support the picture Acts paints of extensive missionary activity on the part of the Jerusalem group around Peter and James, history does not record who performed this astounding feat.

**Additionally, it was apparently done without any need for justification. There is not a murmur in any Pauline letter, nor in any other epistle, about a Christian need to defend such an outlandish doctrine.**

No one seems to challenge Christian preaching on these grounds, for the point is never addressed. Even in 1 Corinthians 1:18-24, where Paul defends the "wisdom of God" (the message he is preaching) against the "wisdom of the world," he fails to provide any defense for the elevation of Jesus of Nazareth to divinity. He can admit that to the Greeks and Jews the doctrine of the cross - that is, the idea of a crucified Messiah-is "folly" and "a stumbling block." **But this has nothing to do with turning a man into God, a piece of folly he never discusses or defends, and a stumbling block no traditional Jew could have circumvented. That his opponents, and the Jewish establishment in general, would not challenge him on this fundamental Christian position, forcing him to provide some justification, is inconceivable.**

Scholars have traditionally postulated this rapid application to Jesus of all the going philosophical and mythological concepts of the day. But they are unsure who did it, or why. It was hardly the product of that circle of simple fishermen whom the Gospels place around Jesus, men who would probably have been barely able to read much less understand philosophical concepts like the Greek Logos or Jewish personified Wisdom and decide that the teaching Master they followed had been the very embodiment of these concepts.

More recent scholars have suggested that gentile circles in places like Antioch were responsible over time for applying current philosophical interpretations about the workings of Deity to Jesus of Nazareth, and that Paul was converted to one of these "Christ cults." But this scenario runs into problems. Such groups, being distant from the places of Jesus' ministry and forming after his death, would have had no contact with the man himself. **One has to wonder how anyone, gentile or Jew, would have been impelled to create such a cosmic product out of someone they had never laid eyes on. There is no question that what was allegedly made of Jesus owes much to Hellenistic (Greek) ideas, but these ideas not even gentiles had ever applied to an historical person. Thus we can judge that the leap would have been, in its own way, as unprecedented and shocking for them as it would have been for mainstream Jews.** (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 11-22).



## THE EXISTENCE OF "THE CHRIST" CULT

Moreover, such a proposal founders on a very important consideration. To judge by the chronology he outlines in Galatians 1 and 2, Paul's conversion had to have taken place somewhere between 32 and 36, only a few years after Jesus' presumed death. **Since Paul did not invent the Christ cult (he persecuted such groups, and there are prePauline elements in his letters which are the product of others), it existed at that time.** It must have been thriving even in Jerusalem.

**Answer for yourself:** Who, then, in the very heart of religious Israel, had turned Jesus into a cosmic deity and attached Hellenistic mythologies to him almost as soon as he was laid in his grave?

**Answer for yourself:** Did Paul, a Jew born and bred, as he tells us, simply swallow the whole blasphemous proposition without a murmur of indigestion and fell back on his pagan upbringing in Troas?

**Answer for yourself:** Did he and so many other Jews allow gentiles - wherever they may have been - to persuade them to betray the most cherished principles of their Jewish heritage and turn a man into God?

**Answer for yourself:** Why? What would have led Paul, or gentiles off in northern Syria, to take a simple preacher whom they knew only by report, and turn him into a cosmic deity - no matter how strong they had been influenced by Hellenistic ideas?

**Answer for yourself:** If Paul had no interest in the teacher and his teachings (as evidenced by the scant reference to any of Jesus' teachings), no interest in the miracle worker or apocalyptic prophet, of what use was this Jesus to him as a candidate for divine redeemer?

Both Mack and Robert Funk speak of the Pauline cult's point of departure as the fact of Jesus' "noble death," but noble deaths are common enough in history, including Jewish history, and never before or since have they led to divinization on so exalted a scale. The simple fact of a reputed noble death would hardly have persuaded an educated, observant Jew such as Paul claimed to be, to contravene the most sacred precepts of his heritage and associate this particular man, one he had never met, with God." The cultic presentation of Jesus' crucifixion does not fit the "noble death" scenario. The latter is classically of the warrior or the teacher who dies for his country, his followers, his teachings. These things focus on a life, a cause; in Judaism it is invariably for the sake of the Law. **This is precisely what is missing in the Christ cult, which has nothing to do with Jesus' life, teachings or followers. Dying for sin is not in the same category, especially when placed in the spirit realm; this is a mystical spiritual concept.**

## CONCLUSION

There is no denying that the earliest Christian record in the earlier epistles shows us a Christ Jesus who is presented exclusively in mythological, transcendent terms, with no reference to any human career or earthly teachings and deeds. This silence as applying to the human career or earthly existence of "the Christ" is both deafening and startling beyond imagination! Let me leave you with several "key" questions posted by Earl Doherty in his The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 11-22):

**Answer for yourself:** But if a group is going to elevate its teacher to divinity and apply every philosophical concept of the day to him, why would it at the same time strip away everything to do with the human life he had lived, the life which supposedly had engendered their response to him in the first place?

**Answer for yourself:** Why would it create mythological statements, hymns and creeds about him which contained not a single reference to an earthly career?

**Answer for yourself:** If, as the scholars claim, the mythological overlay - the divinity, the pre-existence, the unifying force to a sundered universe, the redemptive significance - is an "interpretation" of Jesus of Nazareth,

how are we to understand it as such when the object of the interpretation is never mentioned?

**Answer for yourself:** Since the epistle writers themselves give us no hint that they are "interpreting" a human man, are not scholars guilty of "reading into" the documents things they wish to see there, rather than what the documents actually say? We spoke of this above if you remember.

**Answer for yourself:** Would it not make better sense to view that earliest record as representing a belief in a spiritual entity who is but another *version* of the prevailing myths and thought patterns of the day, something upon which an historical garment was eventually hung? Is this presentation of "the Christ" only a reformulation and representation of God's "Christ" since the beginning of time?

Here is your answer to the above perplexing conundrum which this website will reveal.

*Generally speaking, the ancient gnostics, both Christian and non-Christian Gnostics, primarily viewed "the Christ" as an eternal, celestial power, the "Logos", with which it is possible to have an intimate, personal relation, since our higher consciousness is made in its image. For this reason, gnostics stressed the experiential union with the divine, and showed little interest in the historical Jesus, whom it has always been impossible to know in a concrete sense, or even accurately in a historical sense. Because of this, gnostic speculation has always possessed a very strong ahistorical, cosmological tendency and dimension, preferring to concentrate on the liberating realization of Christ within. Now you know Paul as a Gnostic not only because of many of his religious teachings in the New Testament but he was also unconcerned about the teachings of the historical Jesus.*

**This is what you will see as our further study and investigation into Gnosticism and the earliest New Testament texts and their later alterations will reveal.**

If we had no other documentary record than the New Testament epistles, we would probably regard the Son of God preached by apostles like Paul as a divine being like all the other gods of the day, or indeed of any day: confined to the supernatural dimension and communicating with believers and spokespersons through inspiration, visions and other spiritual manifestations. This is the way gods have been perceived to interact with the world from time immemorial. Paul's Christ would have been no different, and no more difficult to comprehend.

## LEAVING YOU WITH A BIG QUESTION

But the later Gospels throw a monkey wrench into all of this. Before their arrival there was not really a problem for the hearers of Paul understood "his gospel" as the "allegorical Christ." But that would change after Paul's death and with the writing of the Second New Testament later by Rome in refutation of this Mystical Christ and the destruction of Marcion's First New Testament which also taught this Cosmic Christ as a Divine Principle and not a human being.

**Answer for yourself:** But if, on the basis of the later Gospel record, it is claimed that Paul and his colleagues are speaking of a human man who was recently on earth and set the new faith in motion and in a historical timeline, how is one to account for the earlier epistle's silence on such a man and his career?

The only sensible conclusion which will be proven throughout this website is the later tampering with, alteration of, and forgery of the earliest New Testament given to us by Gnostic Christians who safeguarded and taught "the Christ" as it had been understood and handed down since time began by Egypt. What we find is that Rome will come along and take control of this "Christian Faith" and destroy almost beyond recognition its religious belief system and in so doing interpret the whole "literally" instead of "allegorically." This I will now prove in the upcoming article. The sad fact about this is that this "literalism" reduces it adherents to **"idolatry" which is related to "blasphemy of the Name of God"**; the unforgivable sin.



did paul teach a "heavenly christ" or a "historical jesus"?

**Answer for yourself:** Will you be able to forgive Rome for corrupting the earliest understanding of God and His "Christ" when they forged the New Testament and took these truths from you?



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# THE SON OF GOD AS "THE CHRIST"

## THE LINK BETWEEN THE "LOGOS" AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY

If you want a challenging and a most surprising religious study then let me recommend an in-depth study of the origin of religious concepts such as the "Son of God," "the Sophia," "the Logos," and "the Christ". What to your amazement you will find is that these religious concepts have been among mankind since the beginning of time and represent some of the earliest Divine Revelations given to mankind. Of course the names might change depending upon nations and culture but the underlying religious concepts are the same. What is important for our study is the knowledge of the fact that this spiritual idea was a fundamental religious idea of the age right before as well as after the first century where we look for the emergence of Christianity. We will discover upon examination that these religious concepts like "the Christ" and "the Sophia" are ideas which Christianity assimilated from preexistent religious teachings and presented to world in a new way.

Most of us are familiar somewhat with the Old Testament and Judaism's view of its God. Judaism has a long history understanding its God as the sole authority and supreme being which has endured throughout the ages. Little has changed for centuries upon centuries. But several centuries before Christianity, Greek thinkers had arrived at their own concept of monotheism. Because they perceived the universe as moving in obedience to a stable law, they postulated a single cosmic mind or governing force behind it. This is know as the "world soul" or the "soul of the Universe." Strands of ideas before Plato became consolidated in Plato, and out of his school came later ideas which, if they did not all go back to the Master himself, were attributed to him and called "Platonism."

This Platonic conception of God was that he was an Absolute Being, a Unity, that he constituted pure mind and inhabited a world of pure spirit. He was not and never could be a part of the imperfect world of matter and the senses, nor could he make any personal contact with it. To humans who inhabited the material, changing world he was inaccessible and incapable of being understood. This is the meaning of the word "transcendent." God is a transcendent being, totally separated from the material universe. God was indefinable.

Platonism taught that the governing force of the universe (God) was something which lay outside matter. God was the true reality while the visible world was only a distant, imperfect reflection of him. Thus the universe was "dualistic" (in two parts). This might sound simple but big problems lay ahead as men reasoned that this understanding of God did not satisfy the cry of men's hearts for God. Surely a compromise was needed otherwise mankind could have no contact with God at all and that was impossible for humanity who believed they were created in the image of God. Thinkers reasoned:

- For how was God to be revealed if He possessed no interface with the world of humans?
- How would humanity benefit from what God had to offer if there were no channel between them?
- How, indeed, had the world even come about if God was so remote?



**Answer for yourself:** How was this problem to be handled?

Out of necessity men had to come to an understanding and bridge the gap between the realm of the invisible pure Spirit and the realm of visible matter. Out of necessity some intermediate force or being had to exist for the link between the Spirit and matter to be connected. Many religious concepts were envisioned to explain this distance between the invisible God and the realm of visible matter. The first task of this "assumed" intermediary had been creation. In Platonism, the process of creation can be described by saying that the mind of God produced Ideas, and another aspect of this mind, God's creative energy (which Plato called the "Demiurge"), took these Ideas or Forms and fashioned copies of them out of matter, thus producing the material world perceived by the senses. All these elements in the mind of God, his Ideas, the creative forces, were seen as "intermediate" and came collectively to be referred to by the term Logos (literally, "Word").

**Answer for yourself:** Did this concept of the "intermediary" begin with the Greeks or can it be traced as far back as Egypt? Yes it can for we first meet the concept of "the Logos" and "the Word" of Creation in Egyptian theology.

The Platonic Logos was thus an emanation of God and God's point of contact with the world. In addition to the Logos being "the" agent of creation, the Logos was the "revealer" of God to mankind! It was God's Logos that revealed God, His nature, His divine will and was the channel of divine aid to the world. The Logos was the bridge between the world of pure soul or pure Spirit and the world of physical matter. The Logos was also the image of God according to which humans were created.

Platonists tended not to regard the Logos as a personal being, but more an abstract force. For some, however, the Logos could provide salvation.

**Answer for yourself:** Did this religious concept of mediation always remain as a "non" person? No. We find the incarnation of "the Logos" in revealing document entitled *Discourse to the Greeks*. This document has in the past been erroneously ascribed to Justin Martyr since it speaks of the Logos as instructing and having "ceaseless care over us," making "human beings gods." Here, for the first time, the Logos has become a personal divinity!

**Answer for yourself:** Is this *Discourse to the Greeks* a "Christ" centered document and a Christian document? No. But yet we begin to see the emergence of ideas which will be assimilated by key thinkers in the soon to emerge religion of Christianity. .

Owing to the problem of bridging the gap between the realm of pure Spirit and the realm of physical matter the impetus of the age was to bring the intermediary between God and the world closer to "literal" matter. This intermediary has to be more like mankind yet he is pure Spirit. Efforts began to mold this spiritual concept into a more personal being which could be understood as more accessible on a human level. This intermediary between the realm of pure Spirit and the physical realm of matter was to be "the Son of God." The Son of God was also therefore called "the Logos."

There are two ways to view "the Son of God":

- The Logos - Son of God dwells within God's creation. It is internal. A strong monotheist like Philo, a Jew, and who was the most prominent philosopher of Hellenistic Judaism would stop short of making his Son and the Logos a personal divine being. Philo of Alexandria, Egypt, is the foremost example of the input of Greek ideas into Jewish thought, a phenomenon which produced as important type of physiology and culture during this period, called "Hellenistic Judaism". Instead, Philo envisioned Moses as a man into whom the power and qualities of the Logos had been infused. Philo stressed that the Logos dwelled within mankind and that it was external to mankind. The Divine Spark of God was within God's creation; especially His highest creation.

- But other Jews did not feel the same rigid restrictions toward God, and could envision their Son as a personal divinity beside God in heaven.

*From the Logos of Greek and Philonic philosophy to Paul's Christ Jesus is hardly any distance at all once these religious concepts were enlarged*

## THE JEWISH PERSONIFICATION OF GOD'S WISDOM

Philo, a Hellenistic Jew, embraced the Logos and associated ideas in his synthesis of Hebrew and Greek religious concepts.

**Answer for yourself:** What ancient Jewish concept existed at this time that also expressed companionship with God and also seen involved as the agent in Creation as we have seen previously with "the Logos"? God's Wisdom.

Mainstream Judaism had its own intermediary figure going back centuries, certainly as old as Plato if not older. The Jews, unlike the Greeks, never saw God as inaccessible. Jewish scribes of the period after the Exile presented God as making himself known and working in the world through a part of Himself they called "Wisdom." There are those who maintain that "Wisdom" was simply a poetic way of expressing certain of God's activities, but most scholars will admit that the portrayal of Wisdom in the biblical and extra-biblical literature makes her a distinct personage or force (Helmer Ringgren, Word and Wisdom, p. 118, 132, etc.).

This was no "Son" of God, however, for the figure of Wisdom was a female. Let us take note that the grammatical gender of "wisdom" in Hebrew is feminine! Wisdom took on a status and personality of her own. She developed her own "myths" about coming to earth, although there was NEVER any thought of her being physically incarnated.

Here is what the Old Testament Book of Proverbs has to say about Wisdom (from 8:1-36):

"By the gate, Wisdom calls aloud: 'Men, it is to you I call . . . I am Wisdom, I bestow shrewdness, and show the way to knowledge and prudence. . . The Lord created me the beginning of his works. when he set the heavens in their place I was there . . . I was at the Lord's side each day. . . Happy is the man who keeps to my ways.'"

There are two important aspects of Wisdom here:

- First, she is "preexistent," that is, she was with God in heaven before the creation of the world.
- She is associated with God in creation, serving as God's agent in the process of creation:

*"In wisdom the Lord founded the earth and by understanding he set the heavens in their place."  
(Proverbs, 3:19)*

**Answer for yourself:** What should we have noticed here?

We should have noticed that the religious themes of "pre-existence" and being an "agent in creation" are familiar to what we have read in the New Testament concerning Paul's Christ. These same spiritual attributes are given to the "Spiritual Christ" in the religious thought of Paul.

*Eph 3:9 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (KJV)*



*2 Cor 8:9 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. (KJV)*

*Gal 4:4 4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (KJV)*

*Phil 2:5-6 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (KJV)*

*Col 1:15-16 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (KJV)*

*Eph 4:8-9 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (KJV)*

Paul shares with us in the above passages the pre-existence of "the Christ." Paul pleads that converts live as sons because "God sent forth his son"; argues for self effacement from the fact that Christ, being in the form of God, "emptied himself"; argues that "the Christ" is the first of God's emanations that is responsible for the creation of all later things; both in the invisible spiritual realm as well as the visible physical realm. As "Lord from heaven" Christ provides the pattern of our resurrected humanity; as he first descended, so he has ascended, the measure of his triumph and assurance of ours.

Baruch 3:37 gives us a line which, even though originally intended as a reference to the Torah (the Jewish Law contained in the five biblical books of Moses, which mainstream rabbinic thought identified with Wisdom), may have had a profound influence on the future:

*"Thereupon wisdom appeared on earth and lived among men."*

**Answer for yourself:** Was this one of the footsteps on the path that eventually brought to earth a different emanation of God-the Son? Perhaps the writer of the hymn to the Logos which was adapted as a Prologue to the final version of the Gospel of John turned it into a song of the incarnation:

*"So the Logos (Word) became flesh and dwelt among us." (Jn. 1:14)*

In the "Wisdom of Solomon," perhaps the most important surviving piece of Hellenistic Jewish writing, we can see a clear and exotic blending of Wisdom with the Logos. This document was almost certainly written in Alexandria, probably in the early first century CE. Like the Logos, Wisdom is now the divine power active in the world, the spirit that pervades and governs all things. She, too, is pre-existent and an agent of creation. She is God's "throne-partner," a step away from Christ sitting at the right hand of God.

*24: For wisdom is more moving than any motion: she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness. 25: For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. 26: For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness. 27: And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. 28: For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom. 29: For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all*

*the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it. 30: For after this cometh night: but vice shall not prevail against wisdom.*

**In the above passage notice the parallels with Paul's Christ:**

- **Wisdom (she) is the breath and power of God**
- **Wisdom is the expressed image of God**
- **Wisdom is all powerful and can do all things**
- **Wisdom dwells within the souls of the righteous**
- **Wisdom existed before creation with God**

**It should be now obvious that the concept of God's Wisdom (she) and Paul's Christ are the same concept and idea!**

## **THE SON AS "WISDOM" AND THE "LOGOS"**

**Answer for yourself:** Have we ever read about God's "Wisdom" in the New Testament and not noticed it?

Similar ideas and concepts that we encounter in the *Wisdom of Solomon* saturates the New Testament epistles. We only need look at the opening verses about the nature of the "Son" in the book of Hebrews, a document which comes either from Alexandria, or from some Palestinian circle with close ties to that city's philosophy.

*Heb 1:2-3 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did we not see above in the *Wisdom of Solomon* that Wisdom (feminine aspect of God) was God's agent in creation, the expressed image of God, and the power of God as we now find expressed though the agent of God's Son? We sure did!

**Answer for yourself:** Is then Wisdom (she) and God's Son the same? Yes they are! God's names in the Bible are both masculine and feminine and we find this expressed through different ways where personification is used to express these nuances within the Godhead. God's Wisdom (she) and God's Son (Christ) are the same idea!

The hymn in Colossians 1:15-20 is stamped with the same imagery:

*Col 1:15-19 15 Who (He...God's Son) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;...*

As we saw before where God's Wisdom (She) is the image of God, the first of God's creations, the agent in all other creations that follow, the sustainer of all creation, and pre-existent with God we now find the identically same concepts expressed though the masculine agency of God's Son. **Paul tells us the same story as we saw in the Wisdom of Solomon only he changes the agent from the feminine Wisdom to the masculine Son.**

**Paul himself tells us that Christ:**



Is the power of God and the wisdom of God

*1 Cor 1:24 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (KJV)*

Is the very image of God:

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

Is the agent of creation, channeling the source of all things that resides in the Father:

*1 Cor 8:6 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (KJV)*

**Paul and other early Christian writers are speaking of Christ in exactly the same language as we find previously in the broader philosophical world, both Greek and Jewish.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is Paul writing any new revelation when he speaks of "the Christ" or is he retelling what was already known and understood by the people of his day? Paul is only giving a review. **This is not "revelation" but only further "illumination" of prior revelation given to the Ancients.**

**Paul's idea of the spiritual Son has absorbed both the Logos and personified Wisdom.** In reading scripture and imagining he is being inspired to a view of God's Son, Paul is drawing on the prominent ideas of his day and the deeper heritage which lay behind them.

Scholarship fully recognizes this, of course, but most Pastors and Christians don't simply because their studies are deficient in such areas of their faith.

**What is very important for us to now understand is that ALL these current ideas were applied to the Joshua-Jesus.** Lacking explicit historical evidence to the existence of Jesus of Nazareth outside of the one book, the New Testament, then one can assume that if there was a historical Jesus that those who came in contact with him, his apostles and other followers, were so overwhelmed by the force of Jesus' personality, by the things he had said and done, that immediately after his death and perceived resurrection they went out, gathered all this sophisticated mythological theory and heaped it upon the humble Jewish preacher they had followed. This is one possibility but not the only one. **At the same time in so doing we have to also assume that in the process, those followers abandoned all former interest in the details of his life and teachings and presented their master in allegorical terms whereby the personified concepts of Wisdom and God's Son were applied to him. In such a way he became greater in death than ever in life.**

As I said the above is one possible explanation for what we find in the New Testament concerning Jesus. Yet the inherent fallacy in such a scenario is easy to see. In the above passages, early Christian writers are presenting the Son as "the image of the invisible God," etc. They are describing a divine figure in terms of divine attributes. **No identification with a human man is ever made, no writer gives us even a hint that an "application" to an historical Jesus is anywhere in their minds. As suggested earlier, scholars are guilty of reading into the text things they find hard to believe are not there. There is no getting around the deafening silence of the absence of any credible and unforged record of the life of Jesus outside the New Testament!!!**

## ALLEGORY NOW BECOMES LITERAL

If you happen to possess a Harper's Bible Dictionary I would direct you to the comments by D. Moody Smith under the heading of the "Logos". Here we find that he states that "it is not immediately obvious why a man sent from God, even the Messiah of Israel, should have played such a role," referring to the Logos' role as God's agent in creating the world. He is quite right.

That Jews, no less, could assign to a crucified preacher the creation of the universe is beyond belief (THINK!)! But of course they did nothing of the sort. The Jews assigned the role of God's agent in creation not to a man but to the spiritual Son in heaven, just as thinkers before them had assigned it to God's Wisdom and others to the intermediary Logos. Due to the later addition of the "literal" Gospels by Rome when they altered the "allegorical" concept of mediation between the pure Spiritual Realm (God) and the Universe (physical realm) we then lose the truths that were first expressed not only in Marcion's First New Testament which did not teach a human Christ or even a human Jesus. But Rome will change all that through forgery, destruction, addition, and pure invention of this pre-existing New Testament after 180 C.E. through the effort of Irenaeus and others which will follow in his footsteps. The historical man entered the picture only when the heavenly son & heavenly wisdom was later thought to have come to earth and lived a life told of in the Gospels. Thus the dating of the Gospels are crucial. Modern scholarship has challenged the traditional dating of the Gospels as "early" and has brought to light damaging facts to this hypothesis like the absence of any quote from a "named Gospel" by any Christian writer until after 180 C.E. (THINK)!!! Cosmic beliefs about a supposed historical man were much easier to accept when applied long after the "fact," and easier still when created by a largely gentile mind.

On the matter of presumed Jewish response to a human Jesus, one of the common observations about groups in the 2nd and 3rd centuries which are styled "Jewish-Christian" is that they did not regard Jesus as a divine figure. The Ebionites, for example, saw Jesus as a prophet Messiah but not the Son of God. But all these groups flourished only after the first century, and the record of fragments from their documents (as in Epiphanius and Hippolytus) comes from the 3rd and 4th centuries. There is great difficulty in tracing Ebionite views back into the 1st century, especially to the Jerusalem community known to us through the letters of Paul.

Thus, our evidence that Jewish-Christians regarded an historical Jesus as simply a human prophet arises only after the figure contained in the Gospels had come to be widely known and accepted as historical. And this again is quite late; as late as 150 to 180 C.E. In fact, certain preserved fragments suggest that earlier Jewish-Christian sects did indeed envision a heavenly origin for Christ, though not as a Son of God. *"They (the Ebionites) say that he was not begotten of God the Father, but created as one of the archangels . . . that he rules over the angels and all the creatures of the Almighty."* (Epiphanius, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 30.16,4; E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol.1, p.158.)

These observations support the view that Jews, as a general rule, were unable to associate a human man with God. Once Jesus was brought to earth and given a human identity through the Roman Gospels in the mid-second century (produced in refutation of Marcion's Gnostic allegorical "Christ" as presented in his First New Testament in 140 C.E.), Jewish groups who were part of the Christian faith (and carried along like everyone else by the juggernaut of the Gospel accounts of Jesus) could no longer accept divinity for such a figure and had to reduce him to human dimensions.

As I stated above such an attitude surfaces as early as Justin around 150 C.E., whose character Trypho the Jew, in *Dialogue with Trypho*, serves to represent the outlook and opinions toward Christianity current in



**Justin's day, when the historical Jesus was beginning to make inroads into the thought of the time (around 150 C.E.).** In chapter 88, Justin puts these words into Trypho's mouth: "For you utter many blasphemies, in that you seek to persuade us that this crucified man ought to be worshiped." Such an attitude in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, whether among Jews or Jewish-Christians, was not likely to have differed from that of the 1st century, and **thus the entire picture of Christianity (up to this time) beginning with a response to a human Jesus by great numbers of Jews, elevating him to the status of a pre-existent divinity with all of God's titles, must be dismissed.**

## **A CHANNEL BETWEEN GOD AND THE WORLD..."IN CHRIST"**

**Paul's Christ, like Wisdom and the Logos, is God's channel in his dealings with the world. It is not a person yet dwell within every living creature.**

Paul has an expression to convey this idea. In the letters of Paul and those who later wrote in his name, we find the phrase "in Christ Jesus" or "through Christ Jesus" over a hundred times. With Wisdom and the Logos in mind, we can see just what this phrase means.

- ***Rom 6:11 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (KJV)***
- ***Rom 12:5 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 4:15 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 1:21 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 5:19 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)***

**Here Paul is using the idea of "in Christ" to represent a channel of contact with God; Christ is the means by which Christians are "alive" to God.**

**Answer for yourself:** Now that we have seen that Paul's Christ is nothing new then were what Christianity considers pagans alive unto God through their "Logos" and their "Wisdom" and their "Sophia" that provided the foundation for Paul's later "Christ"? If you read Plato and Philo you have a hard time putting these people in "hell" for their understanding and love of God permeate every page of their writings.

This intermediary channel is a Spiritual force that has been present since time began; past, present, and future. **This Spiritual force has no reference to a recent historical event or person; it is only a "Divine Concept"!**

At the opening of 1 Corinthians, Paul says that the congregation at Corinth is:

***1 Cor 1:2 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (KJV)***

**Christ is the medium which links the believers of that city with God himself.**

**Romans 8:39:**

***Rom 8:39 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (KJV)***

**Here Christ is the spiritual force which embodies and conveys God's love. Like the Logos, though in a more personal sense, the intermediary Christ allows humanity to reach God and to receive benefits from him. It is often said that the idea of the Logos pervades Paul, but the word itself is missing. Paul, in his writings, uses other words to express the "Logos" such as "Christ" and "Wisdom of God":**

- ***1 Cor 1:24 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 2:7 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 12:8 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (KJV)***
- ***Eph 1:17 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (KJV)***
- ***Eph 3:10 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (KJV)***
- ***Col 1:28 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)***
- ***Col 3:16 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (KJV)***

**The above passages not only equate "the Christ" with "Wisdom" but again we find Paul referring to the pre-existence of both "the Christ" and "Wisdom of God."**

**Titus 3:4-6 tells us:**

***Titus 3:4-6 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (KJV)***

Normally we have been taught that "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus" is a human being in the New Testament and like we have seen in the Gospels "the Christ" is depicted as such but the earliest epistles teach "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" ([Joshua-Jesus](#)) as a spiritual bridge between God and the physical creation. Let us remember that in Hebrew there is such a thing as "parallelism" and the Bible is full of antithetical and synonymous parallelism. The above passage is rather simply if you understand that Hebrew thought often repeats itself over and over again by saying the ideas either twice or the opposite twice. Above we have a perfect case of synonymous parallelism where the same idea is repeated twice. The above verse is now to be understood correctly. **God is the ONLY SAVIOR** thru the medium of the **Holy Ghost which is God's agent of**



salvation to the world. We have already seen that another name for the "Wisdom of God" is the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost. Likewise we have seen Paul's "Christ" is another term for the "Wisdom of God" as well. God is the ONLY SAVIOR and God brings salvation to mankind through the agency of His Wisdom and the Christ. We will see that these are expressions of the feminine and masculine attributes of God in His saving grace. God come to mankind through His Wisdom (the Sophia) and His Christ (the Son). These again are allegorical concepts ONLY and were understood as such by the Ancients and the believers of the first century. Only later do we find an aberration of these earliest Divine Truths as these allegories take upon themselves human flesh through the later Gospels. The saving acts which have occurred in the present time are not the events of Jesus' death and resurrection. They are God's granting of the rite of baptism (being born again) and the bestowing of the Spirit (Judaism teaches this as receiving the soul that comes down from Heaven). The Joshua-Jesus, if you read the article, is again the allegory by which this channel along which this Spirit has flowed from God to the world. This allegory will take upon itself human flesh when proto-Catholics like Irenaeus refutes the earliest accounts of "the Christ" in Marcion's Pauline New Testament and out comes Rome's "golden calf" which is our current New Testaments today!

Christ, then, operates entirely on a spiritual level. He is a communicating and sacramental power now present in the world, impregnating the hearts and minds of believers. These are highly mystical ideas, and there is no justification for scholarship's frequent attempt to see the Pauline phrase "in or through Christ" as a cryptic summary of Jesus' life on earth. (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 87-94).

## "THE CHRIST" HAS COME FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Paul, or a pro-Pauline writer tell us in the Book of Colossians:

*Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)*

The earliest Christians after Pentecost understood that God's Son (Logos-Christ-Wisdom-Sophia) as a Spiritual entity was NOW in their day now being revealed to the world. For them God's Son (Christ-Logos-Wisdom-Sophia) has been "sent" into the world.

*Acts 2:1-4 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (KJV)*

We have seen in earlier articles that the name of the "Holy Spirit" was also understood to be terms used for God's Wisdom (Sophia-Logos) as well as "the Christ." Thus in the earliest Pauline passages the early Church understood that God has sent His "Christ" to them and God through His Christ tabernacles within them in a new way.

Early Christians saw the spiritual Christ as having arrived in a real way, active and speaking through themselves. When Paul and other writers speak of the "Spirit" sent from God, they are usually referring to the traditional idea of the Holy Spirit, the power and presence of God acting within inspired teachers and apostles. Yet on occasion we see a more explicit identification of this Spirit with Christ himself (as in Philippians 1:19), so that Christ becomes a spirit force in his own right.

*Phil 1:19 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of*

*the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (KJV)*

*Gal 4:6 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (KJV)*

1 John 5:20 reads: *"We know that the Son of God has come (literally, **"is come"** - in the present tense) and given us understanding to know him who is real."* The Son is working among Christians at the present time, imparting knowledge of God.

*Eph 2:17 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (KJV)*

In the same way, we can understand the "coming" in Ephesians 2:17: *"And coming, he (the Christ) announced the good news . . ."*

**Answer for yourself:** What was the content of that news as taught by "the Christ" that the writer of the Book of Ephesians mentions?

*"peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near, for through him we both alike have access in one spirit to the Father."* [NEB/my trans.] (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 87-94).

It is very important that you notice that instead of taking the opportunity to refer to some of Jesus' earthly teachings, the writer of the epistles of Ephesians quotes ONLY from Old Testament Scripture: Isaiah 57:19, which speaks of an end-time reconciliation between peoples. Even the preliminary words about preaching good news are based on Isaiah 52:7. This is the Christ who has "come" in the spirit and speaks to the world - a "speaking" found in the Hebrew Scripture ...in the Old Testament Scriptures. The final phrase of the quote identifies him as a spiritual channel to the Father. The writer of the epistle of Ephesians does not give us "one" teaching of the Jesus of the Gospels; not one!!!

## A CHRIST WHO INHABITS THE WORLD OF SCRIPTURE

This fact above has led to an important insight into how the early Christians viewed Christ. Not only is the Son revealed in scripture, the Son **speaks** from scripture. Certain passages in the sacred writings and Hebrew Scriptures were regarded as the voice of the Son, speaking directly to the world.

This is most evident in the epistle to the Hebrews. It begins with the statement:

*Heb 1:2 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Having begun the book of Hebrew by stating that God's Son is not "speaking" then where do we find this message of the Son as spoken of by the writer of the Book of Hebrews? NOWHERE!

In the absence of any teaching of the Son of God in the epistle of Hebrews then this "speaking of the Son" would seem to be something other than the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, for not a single Gospel saying is offered through 13 chapters, not even a reference to the fact that Jesus had taught in an earthly ministry. Instead, when "quoting" the voice of the Son to make his arguments, the author draws on passages from the Hebrew Scripture that are identified as the Son's



## own words.

When seeking to illustrate (2:12) that the Son considers believers to be his brothers, he offers Psalm 22:22, *"I will proclaim thy name to my brothers."* More than one commentator has sought to explain why the writer would not have drawn on such sayings as are found in the Gospels, for example in Mark 3:35: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother." Hugh Montefiore (Hebrews, p. 63) suggests that this practice of **putting scriptural texts into Jesus' mouth was "the tradition of the early church."** That is an understatement of unbelievable proportions. What we have seen and continue to see is that in the complete lack of any historical reference to the Jesus of Nazareth outside of this "one" book the New Testament the early church and writers of the New Testament were left with no recourse owing to the fact that no historical record existed of the human Jesus and any supposed teachings. They were left with pure invention and purposeful misquotation, mistranslation, and misuse of the existing Hebrew Scriptures to which they, as Montefiore stated, put into Jesus' mouth as they created a human "Christ" and put flesh upon him.

**The scriptural 'sayings' are prefaced by a "he says" - in the present tense - showing that in the writer's mind, the Son is an entity who is known and communicates now and today, through the sacred writings, not through any past preaching career on earth.**

Lacking any historical career for this historical Christ the early writers and forgers of the New Testament had to create one to which they did when they refuted Marcion's First New Testament and his Spiritual Christ.

*Heb 10:5 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (KJV)*

**Unbelievable alterations of the Hebrew Scriptures were made in order to create a human "Christ"**. Above we are seeing a quote taken from the Hebrew Scriptures and presented by this writer of the Book of Hebrews that would lead us to believe that Jesus, coming from God, was given a human body long prepared for him in the mind of God. But the actual Hebrew Scriptures says something entirely different:

Psalms 40:6-8 says as taken from the Hebrew Bible:

*"You, O Lord my God, have done many things; the wonders You have devised for us cannot be set out before You; I would rehearse the tale of them, but they are more than can be told. You gave me to understand that you do not desire sacrifice and meal offering; You do not ask for burnt offering and sin offering. Then I said, "See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me". (JPS)*

The Soncino version says in Psalm 40:6-8

*"Many things hast Thou done, O Lord my God, Even Thy wondrous works, and Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to be compared unto Thee! If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be told. Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; Mine ears hast Thou opened; Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I: 'Lo, I am come With the roll of a book which is prescribed me'"*

As we have seen God did not "prepare a body" as the writer of the Book of Hebrew attest but rather God opened the ears of his servant in order that he could understand the Torah and God's message to mankind. This same message God was later to send into the hearts of His children through His Christ. **This is but one example of hundreds to show the reader the early literary creationism by the early writers of the Jesus myth.**

**The writer of the Book of Hebrews views scripture as presenting a picture of spiritual world realities, where the Son operates and speaks. This is the meaning of the epistle's opening statement, for God in this final age speaks to the world not through the teachings of an earthly Jesus but through a new**

**reading of scripture, in which the voice of the Son is to be heard.**

As late as the end of the century, the same phenomenon can be detected in the epistle 1 Clement. In chapter 22 'Clement' says:

*"All these promises (by God) find their confirmation when we believe in Christ, for it is he himself who summons us through the Holy Spirit, with the words: 'Come, children, listen to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'"*

**Clement regards this quote from Psalm 34 as a personal summons from Christ, as though Christ himself is telling Christian readers that he will teach them the fear of the Lord.** When he earlier (ch. 16) describes Christ's sufferings, he quotes a passage from Psalm 22, again presenting it as the voice of Christ himself, telling of his experiences of suffering and rejection through the words of scripture.

**These early writers provide us with an insight into the fundamental nature of early Christian thought.**

- Christ was a spiritual figure and not a human-fleshy individual like we believe today because of the later writing of the gospels where the Heavenly concept of the Spiritual Christ takes upon himself human flesh.,
- The Christ was not a "past event" some 50 years earlier but a present force who was accessible through the sacred writings of the Hebrew Scriptures... not the later forged ones in the New Testament
- Scripture was not the prophecy of the Christ event, but its embodiment.
- The Son inhabited the spiritual world of the scriptures, God's window on the unseen true reality.





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# PAUL'S GOSPEL: A SYNTHESIS OF GNOSTICISM, MYSTERY RELIGIONS, AND JUDAISM

The truth, however, as we have seen if you have kept up with the prior articles in this series and on this website, is that Jesus did not found a new religion at all, but simply sought to play an accepted role in the story of an existing religion, Judaism. As a prophet a would-be Messiah Jesus dies with Israel failing to merit the Kingdom of Heaven. Israel, failing to rise to her calling as a holy nation and a Royal Priesthood to the world, not only postpones the manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven's appearance but her king as well. Jesus, a good Jew, lived and breathed Judaism and gave his life for it's futherment. Never did it ever enter into his mind one time that Biblical Judaism was not the way for mankind; both Jew and non-Jew. For Jesus there was no need for a "second" religion; the problem was not with Judaism but with men's hearts. It was Paul who founded the replacement religion known as Christianity today, and he did so by creating a new story which really was not "new" at all; rather, it was a unique synthesis of "old" stories that had a unique appeal to almost everyone...except the Jews of course. Paul's new synthesis, his new story, was one sufficiently powerful and gripping to launch a new world religion among the non-Jews. In this new story Jesus was given a leading role, but this does not make Jesus the creator of Christianity.

## THE DESCENT OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR....

The basic theme in the Pauline religious synthesis and religious myth can be summed up in one phrase: **the descent of the divine savior**. Everything in the so-called theology stems from this: for since salvation or or rescue comes from above, no capability or potential can be ascribed to the action or initiative of man to improve his situation. Man is totally helpless and undone without any actions that can be taken by him to even "work out" his salvation as a co-partner with God. Understand right now that this is not Biblical Judaism, this is not the message of Moses and the Prophets, and this is not the message taught by Jesus as well! In fact such ideas as taught by Paul totally contradicts the Torah. In Judaism man and God work together in salvation. One has to look to **Gnosticism** and other forms of dualism for such ideas of the utter incapability of man to be co-partners with God in salvation!

Inherent in such Gnostic beliefs is embedded the idea of **predestination**. Thus some kind of doctrine of predestination follows: when the divine rescuer and savior descends, he does not look to see who "deserves" to be rescued, because this would be to ascribe some kind of saving efficacy to something that man does by his own effort, whatever he does that comprises deservedness.

**Answer for yourself:** Since in Gnosticism we find the divine descent of the savior who has of course by necessity no human birth, then did this Gnostic belief coupled with the virgin-born sun-godmen of the mystery religions help explain why Paul, who wrote 2/3 of the New Testament, does not mention at all anything about Jesus' childhood or his birth?

**Answer for yourself:** Could this descent of the divine savior of Gnosticism (the pattern first applied to Jesus by Paul) help explain why the "infancy narratives" do not appear until almost 200 A.D. among the New Testament writings and also help explain why the first New Testament collected did not have such "infancy narratives" and "genealogies" as we find today in Matt. and Luke (remember Paul's writings were first and had a major influence upon the Gentile writers of the New Testament)? You bet it does! Only later when Christian Gnosticism was waning in popularity with the ascendancy of Western Christianity was there a need to explain away Gnostic Christianity's view of Jesus as a descending Gnostic savior and give him a "birth." This explains why there were no accounts written of the early years of Jesus until almost 200 A.D. and such efforts were directly to counteract Gnostic beliefs concerning Jesus as their divine savior who was not "flesh" but pure spirit. One only has to see passages like the following to understand how early Christianity struggled over whether Jesus had a body of flesh (human) or that he only seemed to have a body of flesh but was really only a spiritual apparition (Gnosticism).

*1 Jn 4:2 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (KJV)*

Back to our point according to Paul's theology mankind can do nothing to be a co-laborer with God in working out his own salvation as no flesh will be justified in the sight of God by any action on the part of mankind.

*Rom 3:20 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** That being the case one only could wonder as to how anyone could know who will be rescued and saved? The answer is simple. There was no way to know. Those will be rescued whom the saviour has decided to rescue and save.

**Answer for yourself:** What, then, can we do to be rescued? Nothing, except to have "faith!"

**Answer for yourself:** What does this mean? It means to rely entirely on the descending saviour, and to abandon every other hope of rescue. But surely even to have an attitude of faith requires some kind of effort, and, if so, not everything is contributed by the saviour. This is perplexing to theologians who struggle with this paradox; but the basic thing is still the story: rescue comes from above.

## THE DESCENT OF THE SAVIOR FROM "ABOVE" REVEALS TWO REALMS OF EXISTENCE...ONE ABOVE/ONE BELOW

The descent of the divine savior implies other narrative elements. It means that there are two realms, Above a Below: Above is the region of Light, and below a religion of Darkness, the dark prison from which we need to be rescued and from no one belonging to Below can release us. Thus no Below-type act of liberation can do us any good, no transfer from one area to another. What imprisons us is the human condition, which is one of bondage to the powers of Evil.

**Answer for yourself:** Since the realm of "below," where mankind is born, lives, and dies, is Evil there had to be a reason for the existence of this "Evil." Do you what was developed to explain the existence of this "Evil" we find below? The doctrine of Original Sin.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find the doctrine of Original Sin in Moses, the Prophets, Biblical Judaism, or the teachings of Jesus? No! That is not to say we cannot find "sin" in the Old Testament but along with it comes "free will" where man is called to choose "Godliness."

As stated, from this aspect of the story comes naturally the doctrine of Original Sin, a re-reading of Paul of the Hebrew story about the ejection of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, which in the story itself, and its



traditional Jewish exegesis, did not have this radical connotation.

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not strike you rather funny that Paul, a Pharisee of Pharisees and a supposed student of the great Gamaliel, is teaching a doctrine that is totally foreign to Biblical Judaism and it's exegesis of it's own faith?

So far the story as laid out in this article so far is the same as that found in the type of religion known as Gnosticism. Recent discoveries have shown contrary to what was previously argued, **Gnosticism existed before Christianity, though it later took Christian forms.** Thee essence of the Gnostic myth was that this world is in the grip of evil, and therefore a visitor (or a series of visitors) is necessary from the world of Light, in order to impart the secret knowledge (gnosis) by which some privileged souls may escape from the enslavement of the world. In Gnosticism, this world is regarded as so evil that it cannot have been created by the God (the good God). It was created by a limited or evil power called the Demiurge (creator otherwise known as the God of the Jews [YHVH]). ). The true High God lives in a region beyond the skies, but he has pity on humanity and sends them an emissary to teach them how to free themselves from the Demiurge. In some Gnostic sects the Demiurge is identified with the God of the Jews, and it was thought that the Jewish Scripture, the Torah, was given by this evil deity. The Jews were therefore regarded by these sects as the special people of the Demiurge and as having the role in history of blocking the saving work of the emissaries of the High God. **While anti-Semitism (in the sense of intense dislike of Jews) was not uncommon in the ancient world, it was probably among the Gnostic sects that the most radical form of anti-Semitism originated - the view that the Jews are the representatives of this cosmic evil and this evil God, the people of the Devil.**

## PAUL'S GOSPEL IS GNOSTIC TO THE CORE....WE DON'T KNOW THIS BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT GNOSTICISM TODAY

Paul's Epistles show a form of Gnosticism which is overlooked by 95% of Christiendom if not more simply for the reason that we are 2000 years removed from Gnosticism and we fail, when reading Paul, to recognize it's main doctrines in the Pauline writings. What makes it even more complicated again is the Christian's almost total lack of understanding of what both Biblical Judaism of the first century as well as the mystery religions actually taught. When you add these three "deficiencies" together the normative Christian is incapable of reading the New Testament and being able to separate out what Jesus the Jew would have believed from the Gnosticism and the Mystery religious doctrines in the New Testament. Lacking such information that only comes from a dedicated time of serious study the Christian is relegated to reading all that is in the New Testament and the Pauline writings and "accepting by faith" that what he is reading is a faithful representation of the Jesus of history. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!

As stated above in summary fashion the problem is that when encountering Paul we find a rather complicated and unique synthesis of all three of these world views from the first century. The Pauline corpus of literature in the New Testament is an amalgamation of all three world views: Judaism, Gnosticism, and Mystery Religions. Understand that this had never been done before Paul; he was the originator of this "new" world religion and his efforts has blurred almost beyond recognition the true Jesus of history. Therefore, the Pauline "religious beliefs system" and his "Christian myth and synthesis" is worth isolating, though it is combined with other, non-Gnostic mythological elements (Judaism and mystery religions). The basic perception of Gnosticism is certainly present in Paul: that this world is so sunk in evil that rescue from above is a necessity (Rom. 7).

*Rom 7:24-25 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (KJV)*

But Paul's Gnosticism is not without some quirks. The mythological details of Gnosticism are modified in Paul's unique synthesis of these three world views. Paul does not think that this world was actually created by an evil power; he accepts the account of Genesis that the world was created by God (YHVH). In this he maintains Judaism's account of creation. But, unlike Judaism and the religion of Jesus, Paul believes, as does Gnosticism, that the world has come under the control of an evil power; the Earth is captured territory. This is why there can be no hope of salvation except from outside or "above."

The importance of the concept of an evil power or the Devil in Paul's thought, or rather mythology, cannot be overestimated and here again we find Paul departing from Biblical Judaism and what the Jewish Scriptures teach about Satan. When referring to this power, he generally uses expressions derived from Gnosticism rather than from Judaism. Thus Paul gives the picture of the assault of cosmic evil powers on Jesus in these words:

*1 Cor 2:8 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (KJV)*

The expression "princes of this world" does not refer to earthly rulers such as the Romans or the High Priest, but to supernatural powers who rule over "this world" in the sense of "this cosmic era." Likewise, Paul uses the expression "principalities and powers" and other such expressions with Gnostic connections to

*Rom 8:38 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (KJV) refer to the supernatural forces that oppose Jesus and himself (e.g. Romans 8: 38).*

On one occasion, Paul even calls the supreme evil force a "god" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

Paul thus thinks of the forces of evil as organized in a hierarch (typical of Gnosticism again) and as having power independent of God, at least for a period in cosmic history. For Paul, it was primarily to break the power of these forces that Jesus came to the world; though the earthly power that opposed him, that of the Jews, who seemed to be his main enemies, was only on the surface, for he was engaged, in reality, in a vast cosmic struggle in which his earthly antagonists were the pawns of evil supernatural forces. This is the core of Gnostic thought and let me again stress that this is not Biblical Judaism. The Persian and Gnostic religious beliefs are the origin for Paul's statements. Again this is a perfect example of Paul's synthesis of various world views in his presentation of his unique Gospel.

*Rom 16:25 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (KJV)*

One thing is for certain that Paul gets correct; it surely is a mystery all right because he was the first to conceive "this mystery" and relate it to others. I cannot stress enough the uniqueness of Paul's invention. It never seems to amaze me how as Christians we can think that the Jesus of the New Testament was believed to have come with a Divine and Unique revelation from God when what Paul teaches about him was previously known and applied to various other godmen throughout recorded history. If



**anything the Pauline Jesus is a clone...in reality a tri-clops (three world views rolled into one man).**

Even Iranian religion, from which the dualism of the Gnostics was ultimately derived, the evil supernatural power was regarded as inferior to the good power in that good would ultimately prevail. So Paul's dualism is hardly less extreme than that of Iranian or Gnostic religion. It has been argued recently that Paul derived this dualism from Jewish, not Hellenistic, sources since the Jewish Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical books do give an important role to Satan; and the Qumran writings of the Dead Sea also ascribe much of the evil in the world to the activities of an evil angel called Balial. These writings, of course, were excluded from the canon of scripture by the Pharisees, who strongly opposed dualism and regarded Satan as merely one of God's angels, who did not rebel against Him, but obeys his orders, whether the Angel of Death or as prosecutor of human beings in the divine court. **Even in purely Jewish terms, Paul's dualism would exclude him from the Pharisee mode of thought.** But in any case, there is a great difference between Paul's dualism and that of the Jewish writings mentioned, which, though affected by despair, never descend to the depths out of which Paul's writings spring. Though the Jewish Psedepigrapha and Qumran writings have a sense of cosmic evil, they still believe in the efficacy of the Torah and of the election of Israel; they do not require a savior from the upper world in order to make human life workable.

**If as a Christian you have thoroughly read and understand Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings correctly, then you know that God has said the same thing throughout the Jewish Scriptures and that is this: That it is through the practice of the Torah (faith in God and intense desire and effort to respond in love to Him through obedience to the Commandments and Laws of God) that the power of evil is eventually broken in men's flesh and the world (training in obedience); and this means that the exercise of human will to good is still the most important factor in history.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is this what Paul teaches in his epistles? **NO!**

Paul takes a completely different approach as seen in the utter helplessness of mankind to remedy evil in this world (Rom. 7).

**Rom 7:15-24 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (KJV)**

The scene of the battle between good and evil is still within the human psyche, not removed to the skies with humans as helpless and passive reflections of the conflict. On the contrary, the battle that goes on between supernatural powers is a reflection of the battle on Earth; and the outcome of this battle will be a transformation of the Earth, not an organized escape from it (rapture).

**No plausible Jewish model can be found for Paul's type of dualism; the only contemporary parallel is in Gnosticism. There are some differences, of course, but even in the differences we note a basic similarity; and here we must bear in mind that there were many varieties of Gnosticism, and that the central doctrine of the evil of this world and the need for extraterrestrial salvation could receive an almost infinitely varied mythological elaboration. Paul's variety does not include the notions that the evil power created the world and the Torah; but it contains notions that perform the same kind of**

function.

## THE TORAH PRESENTS A CHALLENGE FOR PAUL...HE HAS TO DISCREDIT THE TORAH AND HE DOES

Paul belongs to the kind of Gnosticism that was fascinated by the Jews and Judaism, and sought to weave them both into its pattern, usually with anti-Semitic effect (the Jews are the people of the bad God-creator of matter...and the recipients of the Torah which also finds its origin with this bad God-creator). The Torah, in this kind of scheme, is acknowledged to be of supernatural origin, but it comes from the wrong supernatural source. Yet the Torah, for this kind of Gnostic, contains a secret message: despite itself, it gives information about the tradition of the "true gnosis." Over and against the official tradition contained in the Hebrew Bible there are hints of an alternative tradition, by-passing the authority of the Jews and Judaism. Thus we find the Gnostics concentrating on figures in the Torah who are not Jews, but who nevertheless seem to have authority: such as Seth, the son of Adam born after the murder of Abel by Cain; or Enoch, reputed to have been taken alive into heaven; or Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High who was not of the Jewish Levitical priesthood. Paul does the same thing in choosing "Abraham" as his paradigm of faith and will use him in selling his theology to the Gentile world. On figures such as these it was possible to construct the fantasy of an alternative tradition, stemming not from the Jewish God, but from the High God above whose message far transcended Judaism. In order to present this "alternative tradition" it was necessary to discredit the origin of the Torah and Paul is up for the task.

## PAUL CHANGES THE ORIGIN OF THE TORAH

Now this is important that we understand what comes next. Paul, as previously noted, was not your normal gnostic. He did not adopt the Gnostic myth of the creation of the world by the Demiurge; but he adopted the almost equivalent myth of the "rule of this age," the evil power who had taken over the world, though he did not create it. Likewise, Paul did not adopt the Gnostic myth that the Torah was given by an evil power and was thus an evil work; instead, he introduced the view that the Torah was a work of limited authority. Giving mythical expression to this view, Paul asserted that the Torah was given not by God, but by angels and not God (again Gnosticism is heavily "angel" centered). This demotion of the status of the Torah is seen in Paul's epistle to the Galatians:

*Gal 3:19-20 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Moses). 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (KJV)*

Various scholars have tried to argue that the Jewish sources contain the notion that the Torah was given by angels, not by God, and that therefore Paul was not saying anything startling or new in this passage. If the Torah was "ordained" by angels that means that they originated it, while if they only "promulgated" it, it may have originated from God. Despite the convoluted arguments of scholars, there is no parallel to Paul's idea that the Torah was given by angels in Jewish sources, which all insist that God was the sole author of the Torah and that was God Himself, not angels, whose voice was heard on Mount Sinai "giving" the Torah. Again we find religious ideas of Paul that lie completely outside of Biblical Judaism.

**Answer for yourself:** Where did Paul get his conflicting ideas that the Torah was given by angels and not God?

The only parallel to Paul's statement is to be found in the Gnostic literature which states that the Torah was given by an inferior power, the Demiurge. Paul is thus adapting the Gnostic doctrine of the



inferiority of the Torah: instead of being ordained by an inferior and also evil power, it is ordained by inferior but beneficent powers. This is in accordance with Paul's view of the Torah as merely temporary and as foreshadowing something greater than would supersede it, the advent of the descending gnostic savior. The other two references to the angels as authors of the Torah in the New Testament (Acts 7:53 and Hebrews 2:2) are simply based on Paul's statement here. Paul was the sole creator of this myth about the angels fathering the Torah. Here again we encounter the pressure that exists in the Christian tradition and scholarship to deprive Paul of his originality as the inventor of Christianity.

## FOR PAUL THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM WAS SUPERIOR TO THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

The "intermediary" to whom Paul refers is Moses, but his remark that "an intermediary is not needed for one party acting alone, and God is one" is somewhat cryptic. The best explanation seems to be that Paul is pointing out that the Torah constitutes a covenant or contract between two parties, God and Israel. God's pronouncement of blessings to Abraham, on the other hand, was one-sided, with Abraham as passive recipient, required only to have "faith": consequently no "intermediary" was needed. This one-sided conferring of blessing is, for Paul, a far superior and more immediate form of communication between man and God, reflecting again the Gnostic belief in the helpless state of man, utterly dependent on salvation from above. Paul thus rejects as inferior the Jewish concept of the human nature, by which the Torah constitutes a covenant and agreement between two partners, God and Israel. If you have ever studied Covenants for yourself you find that God's Covenants are successive and greater as time goes on. Basically they are cumulative and each in succession has greater responsibilities and greater blessings. To say that the rudimentary Covenant with Abraham was superior to later Covenants which God made with His people destroys the whole idea of progressive revelation and again is a totally false idea as presented by Paul.

## PAUL'S USE OF ABRAHAM IN SCRIPTURE...AND HE GETS IT WRONG AGAIN

Paul's use of Abraham his discussion in Galatians and elsewhere is interesting in context of our consideration of his affinity to Gnosticism. We have seen that the Gnostics used non-Jewish biblical characters such as Seth, Enoch and Melchizedek as alleged representatives of alternative traditions of "gnosis." Paul uses Abraham in just the same way. Abraham, though the ancestor of the Israelites, was also the ancestor of other nations and was a pre-Mosaic figure not involved with the Torah. For Paul the use of Abraham as his "pattern" for his gospel of "faith" was necessary because Paul used Abraham in shadowing the obsolescence of the Torah even before it was given. This trend is developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews (written by a later disciple of Paul, though wrongly attributed to Paul himself by Church tradition), where the figure of Melchizedek is used in the same way, to show that there is an alternative priesthood, superior to that of the Jewish Aaronites. These "characters" are used by Paul because for him they lived in an era before the "Torah." Their example was used to promote the idea of "faith" without the Torah as being acceptable to God which is what Paul is teaching in the New Testament as again the Torah was not necessary any longer because since a product of the "bad-creator-god." However Paul again gets his theology wrong as attested by the following verse:

*Gen 26:5 5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (KJV)*

Notice with me the word "law" in the above verse [Strong's number 8451 towrah or torah- law, direction, instruction

- a) instruction, direction (human or divine)
  - 1) the body of prophetic teaching
  - 2) instruction in the Messianic age
  - 3) the body of priestly direction or instruction
  - 4) the body of legal directives
- b) law
  - 1) law of the burnt-offering
  - 2) used of special law, codes of law
- c) custom, manner
- d) the Deuteronomic or Mosaic Law

As you can see Paul again is wrong because every Covenant that God has ever made with man contains God's admonitions for mankind in the form of commandments and laws which are literally Covenant stipulations that is required of man. Mankind's honoring of them through obedience always brings the blessings of the Covenant and his disobedience always brings chastisement. This means dear reader that Paul's use of Abraham is totally discredited in trying to present a case of "faith only" as the way to please God!

This use of non-Jewish figures from the Bible (Abraham) by Paul, so reminiscent of Gnosticism, is not, however, the main strategy of Paul and of the Pauline Church with regard to the Hebrew Bible. The Gnostics regarded themselves as outsiders and outside mainline Judaism to say the least. Therefore it was necessary to construct an "outsider" tradition from biblical materials so they choose for their examples of their plain non-Jewish people before the giving of the Torah in Scripture. Thus the use of Abraham by Paul repeatedly throughout the epistles. In so doing they were rejecting the main line of the biblical story as concerned with the people of the Demiurge (YHWH). Basically they sought to change the Biblical revelation and the Biblical story. Paul, however, and the Christian tradition that followed him, adopted a much bolder line. He asserted that all the main prophets of the Hebrew Bible were proto-Christians. For Paul none of them (not even Moses) had regarded the Torah as permanently binding; all of them, according to Paul, had looked forward to the advent of the saviour who would abolish the Torah and show the true way of faith and salvation through "faith" in this special "knowledge" that this descending savior would bring (faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of this dying descending savior for salvation).

This Pauline "gospel" amounted to a wholesale repudiation of the Jewish religiohistorical scheme since time began let alone the messages of Moses, the Prophets, the writings, and the teachings of Jesus! Everything up to now according to Paul was wrong and had to be replaced with his "gospel."

Alterations of this kind were not unique to Paul, who accepted the Old Testament in full as the word of God, but instead he imported his own meanings into it, and turned it into a coded message of the Pauline mythology. In this way, the succession of Hebrew prophets was put into the place of the succession of "outsiders" bearing "gnosis," envisaged by the Gnostic exegetes of the Bible. Moses and the prophets were now the outsiders, because they knew the Christian meaning of their message, which was rejected by the Jews, who insisted on the permanence of the Torah and treated the prophets as they later treated Jesus. The division between Jews and outsiders is retained, as in Gnosticism, but the lines are differently drawn, with the result that Pauline Christianity, instead of opposing prophetic Judaism, appropriated it for its own purposes.





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# THE HIDDEN GNOSTICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE ORIGINAL PAULINE WRITINGS

Let us set the stage for what we must come to understand if we are ever to have a through understanding of the conflicting theologies and the tension between the First New Testament of the earliest Christians and the Second New Testament of Rome. A war is coming; a war over theology and Rome and Western Christianity will win. Eastern Christianity reflecting more closely the beliefs of the original Christians will lose. You should know this already; just look out your window to the vast majority of Christianity that exists in the world today and compare it only remotely to what Judaism once believed. Although there are yet differences between Judaism and early Eastern Christianity they have a lot more in common than Judaism and Western Christianity; or at least did at one time before Arianism lost out at the Council of Nicea.

We need to focus on the events happening and paralleling in both Palestine and Rome; especially in the tumultuous first century C.E. In the last half of the first century C.E. we find that in a small corner of the Roman Empire groups of people were banding themselves together to follow the instructions of men claiming to be disciples of a teacher and "messiah" from Palestine. To most of their contemporaries they were yet another Jewish sect. Understand that there were many Jewish sects in this time period. To Romans in positions of authority, they were an extremely tiresome, and possibly seditious one; and since, like all Jews, they would not offer worship to the Emperor, nor worship the Roman Gods. Such failure to worship the Emperor or Roman God gave them the stigma of being called "atheists" in the existing literature that comes down to us today. You should find that fact amazing in light of who is calling these monotheists "atheists." Followers, according to Tacitus, 'of a pernicious superstition', they even worshipped their own leader. As recorded in *Acts of the Apostles* written, as many scholars believe, in and around 80 C.E., "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch". By his adherents, Jesus of Nazareth was called Christ, the anointed one.

**Answer for yourself:** Should we find this strange? Had there been many "Christs" before Jesus? This is what escapes today's Christians. Being called "Christ" is not new; there have been many "Christs" before Jesus of Nazareth. One term that explains this "Christ" is the term "Avatar." Avatar is an Anglicized form of the Sanskrit, *avatara* which means "descent." Something has "come down." The word is used, in a technical sense to denote the descent upon earth of a portion of the essence of a god, which then assumes some coarser material form; usually man but not limited to mankind alone.

**Answer for yourself:** Did this "incarnation" of an aspect of God within a man make him God? No; only anointed for a task in serving God. Rome will later corrupt this concept and make such a one "God" incarnated which is idolatry. This they will do to Jesus of the First Century at the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E.

Such descents of this "portion of God" into this world influencing mankind are believed to have taken place at different ages of the world as God has manifested Himself in and through many "messengers" from on High. Any remarkable man is liable to be regarded as a more or less perfect

**avatar of God, and the consequence one of the worst features of this religious concept has been the offering of divine homage to men, especially the founders of religious sects and their successors.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is this how Marcion understood "the Christ" in the First New Testament when he collected the letter of Paul which reflected this same belief? It sure is as we shall see.

**Answer for yourself:** Since the Jews were monotheists can never could believe or would believe that a man is God in the flesh then is this how the earliest followers of Jesus of Nazareth both saw and understood this man of wisdom and power that walked among them?

**Answer for yourself:** Then is it correct to say that the earliest believers in Jesus, both Jewish and Gentile, could be labeled historically as "adoptionists"? Yes it could. This is reflective of the Ebionites who were some of the earliest Jewish followers of "the Christ" or Jesus as we know him today.

***Matt 24:24 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (KJV)***

**We must at this early time in our study come to the realization that there have been and will always be "Christs;" Jesus was one of many and his followers put their hopes in him that he would ALSO possibly be their long expected and desired liberator and "messiah."**

But Rome did not need any more problems. Many, but not all scholars, connect the name "Chrestus" with the Jewish "Christ;" in particular they were by some believed to be followers of Jesus of Nazareth that were stirring revolt over their messianic beliefs and therefore sought the overthrow of Rome and their hostility toward the Jews. The expected Messiah is to judge the Gentiles due to their cruel treatment of the Jewish people. The Jews needed "salvation" from such Roman barbarism and they needed right then! Now you understand that to the Romans, "Chrestus" was the name of a trouble-maker, put to death in the reign of Tiberius. "Jews were driven out of Rome for rioting at the instigation of one, Chrestus." (Suetonius, Life of Claudius). But we cannot be certain that this "Chrestus" is actually Jesus because there were many false "messiahs" in this apocalyptic age. The truth about the true identity of this "Chrestus" remains today uncertain.

## **WITH MANY HOPES AND RELIGIOUS SECTS COME MUCH CONFUSION**

Today, with so many extraordinary cults proliferating around us, it is not difficult to imagine how the first Christians appeared to those around them, who now heard rumors of yet another kind of religion, another sect, another message of hope that is unique to only their group. One of the weaknesses found in religious histories is that all the adherents of a religion are assumed to be on the same level of understanding. This is particularly apparent in the history of the early Christian Church. **But that does not mean that there were not others who understood differently or came to understand differently or expressed ideas with different meanings. It is probably safe to say that the more spiritual the understanding, the less widespread it is likely to be, and probably the less documented.**

So one has to imagine groups of people who had themselves listened to the teacher in Palestine, or who had heard of his teachings through his disciples or through others - each interpreting what they had heard in different ways, and asking what this new religion was about. **The most difficult question was (and would always be) who was this teacher, this Jesus of Nazareth? What manner of being was he?**

I wish I could tell you that there is just one answer to the above questions but there are not. There were conflicting answers to these questions from the very first. This question is at the root of almost all the great heresies and any answer provokes more questions, which, in their turn, lead to further questions which can



shape or create a form of belief.

There are some things we know for sure. The first Christians were of course Jews, and they continued their worship in the Temple, their reading of Jewish scriptures and their obedience to Jewish Law. At the same time, they followed Jesus as their master, their leader, their hoped for liberator and "messiah." But he died! That is where the problem really begins in many ways.

**Answer for yourself:** Other than the [Essenes were apostates from true Judaism](#) and involved in a synthesis of Sun Worship, Persian Religion, and Judaism and who believed in "two messiah;" one who dies and one who would bring liberation to Israel then where in normative conservative Judaism do we find vicarious atonement and a dying Messiah up to that time? We don't!

But the death of this hoped for "messiah" had to be explained; especially in light of the historical fact that within the time frame allotted by the Prophets for the appearance of the Jewish Messiah when all messianic prophecy would be fulfilled Israel found themselves without their messiah and without their hopes fulfilled. No messianic prophecy was fulfilled and the Jews were exiled again. Theories abounded as to why Israel had "missed their day of their visitation." Not everyone agreed of course with the same theories and division was to be expected.

That division came quickly. As recorded in Paul's epistles and later in the Book of Acts which is heavily influenced by Paulinism there were distinct groups of Judaizing Christians who insisted that Christian converts must keep the Jewish Levitical Laws and observances before they could be immersed and receive "the soul that comes down from Heaven." This is what produced the Galatians letter where no longer enforced circumcision was required for non-Jews to be a part of the Israel of God.

There were divisions and uncertainties even among the apostles, themselves. At first, as has been said, the main body of the followers of the new religion were circumcised Jews, and the "gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter", (Gal. 2:7). Paul was preaching to the Gentiles, the heathen. He wrote,

***Gal 2:7 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (KJV)***

The Acts 15 council will meet shortly and agree with Paul that no longer will the Jews be bigoted toward the non-Jew; enforcing circumcision upon them in hopes of keeping them apart from the Jewish people. This messianic community of Jews, not all of Judaism of course, will repent of their attitudes and hatred toward the non-Jews and no longer enforce full conversion and circumcision upon the non-Jews for them to become part of the Israel of God. It was then decided that the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria need not be circumcised nor keep the Law. These non-Jews coming to God were required only adhere to the Laws of Noah only; to abstain from meats offered to idols, "from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication". These issues listed were mainly table-fellowship issues as shown in our Laws of Noah site. But the sect of strictly practising Jewish Christians continued as a separate body within the Christian community. **But issues surrounding the true identity of Jesus remained; especially between Paul's Gentile gospel ('my gospel') and the Jerusalem Church and their understanding of Jesus and "the Christ."**

**More fundamental than their insistence on Jewish observance was their belief that Christ was the greatest of prophets, the expected Messiah, but that he was a man as other men.** These Judaizing Christians became less important in the early Church after the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD but from them emerged a sect, the Ebionites, which was still in existence in the fourth century. **Take note that these Ebionites again write very negatively about Paul and unlike Paul believed Jesus to be a man as other men; a human being.** You will come to see in time that Marcion and Paul did not see "the Christ" as a human being in the First New Testament although this Gnostic First New Testament is made to look that way later by Roman editing of the First New Testament through forgery. **For the Jews the expected messiah would be "anointed" and indwelling in him would be the descent upon earth of a portion of the essence of God. This would not make him God; only Godly!**

***Luke 4:18 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me [CHRISTED ME] to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (KJV)***

Here we find Jesus the "Avatar." Again we must take time to understand correctly as it was understood **THEN** [2000 years ago] by Jesus earliest followers and friends.

**Strong's Concordance** reveals to us the hidden meaning behind the Greek word "anointed."

5548 chrio (khree'-o); probably akin to 5530 through the idea of contact; to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service: KJV-- anoint.

Now we need to look at the Greek word for "Christ."

**Thayer's Lexicon** says:

5547 Christos- Christ = "anointed"

So we now see that "anointed" and "Christ" mean essentially the same things.

**All "messiahs" were anointed. "The" messiah was expected to be anointed as well; notice I said "the."** And the word "Christ" means "anointed." Many were "anointed" and therefore "christs" and used of God; many Jews were as well but that does not mean that they were **"the"** messiah; but yet "messiahs." What we have to determine correctly is the relationship of "the Christ" in relationship to Jesus. Those who knew him best I believe had the most correct understanding of the man. **Surely common sense says that if resurrected and having spent 40 days with his followers then few questions would have remained that had not been asked or answered by a resurrected man from the dead who was looked upon by his followers as their messiah. If anyone knew just whom this Jesus was surely it would be his closest followers THEN and not Rome some 100 or more years later who hammer out their theology about this man.**

**From where we stand in history, after hearing for so long the words and statements of Christian doctrine, both oral and written in our Christian Bibles, we are brainwashed to think that what we are reading today is what these earliest follower both felt and believed about Jesus of Nazareth. We lack the knowledge that much of our New Testaments today was written, edited, and invented by Rome in refutation of the First New Testament of Marcion and Paul.** This is what I discovered upon serious intense study over these last 15 yrs. It is difficult to put ourselves into the minds of those Christians near in time to the events that gave birth to Christianity. For Jews, trained to centre their whole faith on the conception of One God, it would naturally seem blasphemous to conceive of Jesus as the Son of God. What is amazing is that so many were able to do so, or at least were able to believe that here was someone who was more than a normal human being.

**The crux of the problem we encounter over and over again is how to understand God working in and through mankind; let alone Jesus. You will find as I did that the real problem is one of perspective: allegory or literalism.**

## **"ALLEGORICAL" TRUTH OR "LITERAL" LIES?**

**The Ebionites (the name probably meant "the poor ones", owing to their exaltation of ascetic poverty) were one of the earliest followers of Jesus and thought of Jesus as their "anointed" and would be Messiah, but rejected the belief in his divine nature. He was not God; only Godly!They**



**considered Paul to be a heathen because of his teaching that Jesus, a man, was Son of God.**

**Answer for yourself:** If this can be proven both historically and archeologically that this was the earliest belief about Jesus by those who were closest to him and knew him best then way believe anything else?

But, as time went on, there were those among them who felt that they had to reconcile:

- **The amazing deeds attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (the only Gospel they accepted)**
- **The God-ordained status of "THE" anointed of God, His "Messiah"**
- **The being of an ordinary man.**

There were basically two view that we find expressed in various version:

- **Some held that the Spirit of Christ - the anointed one - descended on the man, Jesus, at his baptism by John the immerser, and left him at the crucifixion, when he died - again as an ordinary man [this explanation of the nature of Christ was to reappear later in various forms and guises, not only in various theologies and religious doctrines, but in the theological Controversies and Catholic Church Councils for hundreds of years]. Of course Rome will, over time, come to call this "human view" a "heresy."**
- **There were those who saw the question from the other side. If Jesus was invoked as "Lord," which is a title often used for Jehovah, and was "come down from Heaven", then how could he be of ordinary flesh and blood like the rest of us? [The question here is if the word "Lord" is begun with a "capital L" or a "small l."**

**Some scholars say that Christ was not regarded as God until well into the second century.** This is startling in light of the fact that the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus who lived with him and knew him best, like the Ebionites, never envisioned the idea that he or the Jewish Messiah was ever to be considered God.

Now it gets more confusing and difficult. We know for a fact that it was the practice of the first groups of Christians, meeting for instruction and worship, to offer prayers to God through Jesus Christ, and there was also direct calling on the Lord Jesus in prayer.

**Answer for yourself:** Was this "Jesus Christ" to be understood "literally" as we have been taught today or is it just remotely possible that these earliest Christians understood this "Jesus Christ" to be allegory and a term used for the symbolic and allegorical concept of "intermediation" between God and man; sort of like the "Logos" or "Sophia"? There it is; I just gave the whole website away. The fact is that we have taken much concerning "Jesus Christ" literally today what the earliest believers understood symbolically only. What we fail to realize is all that is wrapped up in the word "Jesus." This not only was a very common name in Palestine but there existed many "Jesus" religious cults that had nothing to do with the Jesus of history to which Christians focus. The name "Jesus" comes from the Exodus. In Greek the Hebrew name "Joshua" becomes "Jesus." Today it is normal practice to use Joshua for the hero of the Exodus and Jesus for the hero of the gospels, which avoids any comparison of the two. It is important to understand that back in Old Testament times, even the first century, it would have been completely obvious to anyone knowledgeable in Greek and Hebrew that they shared the same name. This is not a coincidence. **The Christian Jesus is a mythic development of the Jesus/Joshua of Exodus.** In Hebrew then name Joshua/Jesus is written with the letters Yod Heh Shin Vah Heh. The letters Yod Heh Vah Heh, known as the Tetragrammaton, were extremely significant to Jewish Gnostics. They were used to signify the unpronounceable name of God, usually rendered today with added vowels as either Jehovah or Yahweh. Philo explains, when the middle letter Shin, known as the Holy letter, is added, the name means "Savior of the Lord." **The honorary title "Christ" is also linked to the Exodus myth.** Paul, or a pro-Pauline writer, tells us that, as well as Jesus, Moses was also "God's Christ" (Heb. 11:24-27).

*Heb 11:24-26 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (KJV)*

So Moses experience "the reproach of Christ" in his life. That seems strange unless we get the "keys" to open our understanding of "the Christ."

**Answer for yourself:** Were you previously aware that Egyptians, who were not Christians, knew of "the Christ"? What was the concept of "the Christ" as they understood it? Could it be that Marcion and Paul and other writers of the First New Testament had this same understanding of this "Egyptian Christ" and we not know it since inheriting a Second New Testament by Rome whereby this "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" has almost totally destroyed by Rome in their refutation of Marcion?

*So we find the concept of "the Christ" as far back as Egypt but understand this is not the same as the "Roman Christ" of the Second New Testament*

As seen above "Christ," which means "Anointed One," is a Greek rendering of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which is an epithet for a leader, used of Jewish kings. Although today the names "Jesus Christ" is inextricably linked to the Literalist figure of the supposed founder of Christianity, in the first century C.E. the name would have been heard obviously symbolic, meaning "the Savior king." Jewish Gnostics and Christian Gnostics after them, understood Exodus to be an initiation allegory. Egypt represented the body. While initiated identify with the body they are "in captivity." Let us recall that Gnostics consider all matter as evil; therefore the body was evil. The Soul was trapped in Egypt (the human body). To "come forth out of Egypt" was understood as leaving behind the idea of being merely a body and discovering that your soul. Egypt is often depicted as if "ignorant" in the Old Testament which seem strange in light of their astounding knowledge. This is explained when you understand the terminology of "ignorant Egyptians" is used to represent those "without Gnosis," who remain identified with their physical selves and fleshly lusts. Crossing the Red Sea was understood as symbolizing a purifying baptism, which is the first stage of initiation on the path of spiritual awakening for those who are "conscious." Explaining the Exodus should be understood "allegorically." Paul tells us this! But let us not forget that Paul/Pauline writers has already associated Moses [an Avatar] with "the Christ."

*1 Cor 10:1-6 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses [God's Christ] in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (KJV)*

You should see how a piece of New Testament Scripture must be interpreted "allegorically" or "symbolically" and not "literally." This is pure Gnosticism that goes unrecognized except by the few.

To these earliest Gnostic Christians like Paul initiation by baptism/immersion began a process in which initiates must face their doubts and confusion, symbolized by the Jews being afflicted in the desert [for our example] for 40 years. The next stage of initiation is about the "death" of the old self, represented by the death of Moses. Moses is mythically reborn as Joshua/Jesus who completes the journey to the Promised Land/ representing the "reborn" initiate who realizes "Gnosis." What we need to understand is that the Exodus Allegory, representing the fundamental stages of Gnosticism, is the framework upon which the Jesus myth of the New Testament was constructed. It was after Seminary in studying Jewish Roots of Christianity that I was first introduced to the concept that so much of the Jesus story in the New Testament was taken from the mystery religions of



dying/risings Gods. At that time I saw and understood this as if literal; only later would I come to see it for what it really was: an allegory told in the form of dying/rising Gods that expressed the slumber of the human soul to its true essence and the later awakening of it to its Divine essence that is trapped in matter (the body). No wonder the Jesus of the New Testament does not fit Judaism when understood "literally." It is an allegory all along expressing Divine Concepts; or at least it once was in the form of the First New Testament given to the world by the Gnostic Christians.

The first stage of initiation for the Gnostic Christian was one of purification and struggle. In the Exodus myth this is the crossing of the Red Sea, which inaugurates 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. In the Jesus story, this stage is represented by Jesus' baptism which is then immediately followed by Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. The parallel to the Exodus story is perfect.

The next stage in the process of initiation is the "death" of the old self which precipitates Gnosis. This is represented in the Exodus myth by the death of Moses and in the Jesus myth by the death of Jesus on the cross. The experience of Gnosis is represented in the Exodus by Joshua/Jesus crossing to the Promised Land and in the New Testament by Jesus' resurrection from the dead and ascension to Heaven. Acknowledging their debt to the Exodus allegory, the original Christians classified people as "the captive," "the called," and "the chosen." Those yet to undergo initiation and still trapped in the idea of being but a physical existence and a physical body are like the Jewish captives in Egypt.

Those who heard the call to awaken and begun the spiritual journey by being initiated into the Outer Mysteries of Christianity are like those Jew who were "called out of Egypt" to begin the journey to their true home. Those who have undergone the process of purification and spiritual struggle necessary to prepare themselves for Gnosis and been chosen to be initiated into the secret Inner Mysteries of Christianity are like those "chosen people" whom Joshua/Jesus leads across the river Jordan to the Promised Land. Initiates who finally realized Gnosis were known as "those who had crossed over." These three classifications parallel the Gnostic understanding of:

- the material
- thy psychic
- the spiritual

Early Christians were well aware of the parallels between their "Jesus Christ" and the Jewish Christ of Exodus. New Testament writers will link Jesus with being called out of Egypt and tie it historically to the sojourn of the Jews in Egypt. But we find no historical evidence that the human Jesus ever went down to Egypt nor any destruction of infants by Herod. But this was again only allegory. Like the Jews in Exodus, in the gospel story Jesus is called out of Egypt, where he has been hiding, like the soul within the body. Again this was never to be understood "literally" but only "allegorically" for the condition of one's soul within his body. The secret teachings hidden by Jesus the Christ of Exodus are finally made public by the reworked figure of Jesus the Christ in the gospels. This is the "secret revealed in former times" but "now disclosed?" of which the Gnostic Paul writes in his letters.

*Eph 3:3-6 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (KJV)*

Now the rest of the website will detail the facts proving this! Of course this seems strange to the average Christian but irrefutable facts that I will share with you will prove that as Christians today reading the now current New Testament that we have completely misunderstood this "Jesus," the "Jewish Messiah," as well as "the Christ."

**We will come to see that this "Christ," this "Logos," this "Sophia" is but a manifestation or emanation from God that functions as a bridge between the Spirit and Matter.** This explains a lot. The *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, (probably written before 90 AD) describes this intermediary principle as understood by the earliest Christians. And Pliny, a Roman historian of the first century, says that **Christians were singing hymns to Christ as God.**

**Answer for yourself:** What then were they doing? Were they, as Pliny thought, worshipping a man? If so, they would be behaving in the same way as the pagan Romans and that would be idolatry. If this "Christ" was to them the man Jesus of Nazareth then why would they fail to worship the Emperor, himself a man, if they were worshipping other men?

**Answer for yourself:** What was their understanding of this "Christ;" "literal" or "allegorical"?

For some of the earliest Christians, the answer was that "the Christ" had only the appearance of a man on earth - he was, in fact, a Theophany or a sort of a phantom. Christ was a Spirit, not a man. This line of thought became known as Docetism, which is not the name of a heretical sect but a tendency that was to appear in many schools of thought and types of heresy in succeeding centuries. Docetism is found in all systems which regard Christ primarily as a symbol, or as a mythological explanation of man's relation to divinity. It is said, that in St John's Epistles, there are warnings against those holding Docetic beliefs, as for instance in

**2 John 1:7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."**

But again this betrays the second century creativity of the anti-Gnostic plagiarism of Roman Catholicism which subjected the Gnostic First New Testament to is Holy Roman Forgery Mill where many writings were invented in the names of Apostles and Paul and others from the Gnostic First New Testament were altered, changed, and edited.

**From the first, then, there existed two opposing conceptions:**

- **Jesus, a man, although a great and divinely inspired one and anointed one; and**
- **Christ, the pure Spirit of God, untrampled by humanity and unlimited by this body of death**

There were also the sceptics, like Celsus, a second-century Roman opponent of Christianity, who insisted that the idea of Jesus being a prophet or a divine Saviour was a gigantic hoax, spread by superstitious peasantry. How could the Eternal Principle become a man? For them, Jesus was either an imposter or else the fabrication of ignorant fishermen.

**Answer for yourself:** So who was he? Is the New Testament depiction of him accurate? Could "allegory" be mistakenly understood today if "literal"? This is what this website will reveal to you and you can make your own decision based upon the evidences shown you throughout this site.

In the part of the world where this new religion began many races, nations and cultures met. The new beliefs had to be explained to a large variety of people. We hear of the poor and the downtrodden who flocked to the new revelation. **But the elucidations and explanations, about which we read, were given to educated, sophisticated men - men interested in religious and philosophical ideas - thinkers and speculators.**

There were the leaders of the Jews themselves, particularly the Pharisees, the strictest and most spiritually orientated of the orthodox Jews. For them, the importance attached to their history as a chosen people had to be included in a Christian philosophy of history. Their understanding of the unity of God had to be reconciled with a belief in the Incarnation.

There were Greeks, whose philosophy had brought them to the idea of one eternal principle underlying all things. To them the idea of Infinity entering into life on earth, or Pure Spirit being connected with materiality,



was nonsensical and even horrifying. Among them were rationalist philosophers and sceptics, but there were also members of the Mystery Religions and initiates who had witnessed their secrets. There were those who had knowledge of oriental religions from Babylonia and Persia, and there were those learned in the studies and sciences of the Egyptians. Christian beliefs had to be defined so as to be understandable to all these questioners.

In the years immediately after the birth of Christianity there were no written records or written teaching. All that could be learned about "the amazing events in Judaea" was through oral instruction. St Paul's letters expressing his ideas about "the Christ" are the earliest written records about Christianity that we have. These letters were probably written between 50 AD and the year of Paul's death, about 64 AD. They had been collected and were being regularly read in all the churches by 90 AD. It is not known exactly when the three synoptic Gospels were written, but it is thought that they were circulating among the Christian communities some time either just before the end of the century or no later than the close of the second century. But we again are brainwashed to think the gospels consisted of those we have today; never thinking for a minute that the earliest Gospels of "the Christ" were Gnostic Gospels long before Rome's refutation and burning of them almost out of existence. Archeological finds some fifty years ago consisting of the Nag Hammadi library of Gnostic Gospels coupled with the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls has made up "rethink" earliest Christianity as most of our current accepted premises are falling like flies. St Paul's letters expressing Gnostic thought, therefore, together with the Old Testament, were the first readings that the churches would have used.

Now we need to pay very close attention: In none of Paul's epistles does he give any stories from Jesus' life, nor any sayings or parables told by him, though he must have been familiar with the collections of Jesus' sayings and the reports of his deeds that were in existence then. It was, however, the relation of Christ to God, to man and to the universe that was important for Paul. It was this relationship that he wanted, above all, to explain to his converts. The two events in the Christian story upon which he dwells are the death and the resurrection of Christ. It is the spiritual and cosmological meaning behind these events that was at the centre of his teaching. St Paul was, in fact, the first Christian theologian - the first, to my knowledge, to develop a system from the facts and the teaching that had been given.

Even in Paul's lifetime there were those who reacted against what he taught; for example, the dissenting groups in Corinth and Galatia, which appear in the epistles. After his death many Judaeo-Christians in Antioch abandoned his teaching, considering it to be a mythologizing of Christ and a purely mystical conception of Christ's role as Redeemer. Again, because of the development of his ideas, Paul has been accused, and notably by a school of writers at the end of the last century, of so changing Christianity as to become its "second founder". Nevertheless, the letters of St Paul were later accepted, early in the second century following Irenaeus' presentation of the Catholic Second New Testament, as authoritative Apostolic teaching, and so they have remained throughout the history of the Church. By this time many of Paul's letter had been subjected to the Roman Forging Mill and much has been invented to give Paul's Christ "flesh."

Though in the epistles there are no references to details of Jesus' life and sayings, Paul probably thought that his readers were sufficiently conversant with them, through the oral teaching which they would certainly have been given. All those events and teachings were handed down primarily by oral transmission for many decades. This was still held to be the essential way for religious beliefs to be passed on to the next generation. As long as those who had been directly in touch with the apostles still lived, this method of spreading Christian teaching continued, together with written records.

Although many documents and writings were held sacred, treasured and read at the places of regular Christian meeting, it was the four Gospels, St Paul's letters, (excepting *Hebrews*), *Acts*, *I Peter* and *I John* that, early in the second century, received general acceptance as embodying the authentic Apostolic tradition. Other writings might be good and profitable to read. There was the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a description of visions calling to repentance, and, for some time, considered to be "divine scripture". There was the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a manual of ethical teaching and church practices. There was a treatise called the *Letters of*

**Barnabas**, which explained the Old Testament as allegory leading towards the New. And there were treasured letters from St Ignatius and St Polycarp. But although these were all considered holy books for private reading, they were gradually eliminated from use at public worship.

**It seems that apart from the Gospels - then as now - the letters of St Paul and of some of the other apostles, and the description of the early Church and its life as given in Acts, were the only documents accepted as authoritative Apostolic writings.**

Many "records" of the life of Jesus were also available. They are even alluded to in *St Luke's Gospel*.

***Luke 1:1 I Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (KJV)***

Some became known as Apocryphal Gospels. The word "Apocryphal" originally meant "hidden or secret"; only later under the influence of Roman Catholicism did it have the meaning of "legendary", and therefore "spurious".

But the four Canonical Gospels, from their earliest appearance, were recognized by most (although not all) as something different, something self-authenticating. They were, at that time, accepted without question as having been written by those whose name they held. Later generations have queried this, and only by lots of study and gathering of knowledge concerning Judaism, Mystery Religions, Gnosticism and Comparative Religions can these documents be analyzed and seen accurately for what they are: non-Jewish and anti-Semitic treatises that pass off the Gnostic Christ as both Jesus of Nazareth as well as the Jewish Messiah.

**The aim of the Gospel writers was clearly not to present an historical biography, although there were certain historical facts given - possibly in order to anchor the accounts and the happenings to a definite time and place. Too bad a lot of these are wrong and reflect errors that Jews could never make unless completely ignorant about Judaism, Jewish History, Jewish Scripture, let alone geography.**

***John 20:31 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (KJV)***

Rumors of these happenings seem to have made small stir in the surrounding districts, in contrast to their later transforming effects. But whatever interpretation is or has been put upon these events, the New Testament writings, together with contemporary and near contemporary evidence, show that something took place at this actual moment which, then and there, gave birth to Christianity.

The documents which the first Christian communities used and which are now included in the Christian New Testament did not define in clear words exactly what *had* taken place. In fact it confuses almost beyond recognition what did occur and by whom. Different types of hearers were asking for an explanation and the first teachers of the new religion had to give them one. **The first Christians themselves had varying conceptions as to the nature of their founder, and these sometimes conflicting conceptions had to be made understandable to people of different races, classes and cultures. There were problems, therefore, from the very beginning and it is by no means simple to discover how the mainstream of "orthodox" belief emerged.**





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# THE GNOSTIC THEOLOGY OF PAUL AS TAUGHT IN HIS AUTHENTIC EPISTLES

Paul's writings are the oldest documents in the New Testament. Ironically the teaching of Paul when examined closely bears little resemblance to the orthodox Christianity of today and yet Paul has been considered one of the pillars of Christendom for centuries. How ironic is that? Paul's theology is decidedly "Gnostic" when one looks at it closely and at the same time possesses a working knowledge of what Gnosticism actually teaches as well as what the original authentic Pauline Epistles really were and what was contained within them before the later forgeries of other "epistles" in Paul's name. This is fact dear readers and not mere speculation as any serious investigation into the Canon of the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers will attest.

Paul did not base his teaching exclusively on the "tradition" of the Nazorean (Jerusalem) community but states unequivocally that his gospel was given to him "through a revelation of Jesus Christ." This is why we often find "two" conflicting voices in the New Testament where the "Pauline Christ" is unfortunately merged with the "Jewish Messiah" on the pages of our New Testaments and few ever see this.

*Gal 1:12 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

Paul's appeal to private revelation for the source of his gospel places him in the category of the "Gnostic," that is, one who knows through divine insight or revelation. Paul as a "vision" and never met the "Jesus" of history and as shown in an earlier article Paul's "revelation" was in 27 A.D. which strangely is 3-4 years before the presumed death of Jesus according to Christian history. Strangely yet is that Paul decided in light of this "revelation" to not visit Jerusalem for 17 years; if he had he could have met the "historical Jesus" who would have supposedly been alive for several more years. I find that strange if not incredible and borders on the "insane" if these events happened as chronicled for us in the inherited New Testament. ***Ironically, and this deserves much contemplation, several "Gnostic" teachers, including Valentinus, pointed to Paul as the source of their teaching. So now we have "literalistic Roman Western Christianity" and "allegorical Gnostic Christianity" which opposed each other fiercely both claiming Paul and his theology as the origin for their religious doctrines!!!***

**Answer for yourself:** How can that be unless there has been some "tampering" with Paul and his "theology" over the centuries?

There are several key ideas in Paul's theology which have been either ignored or misinterpreted but which are, nevertheless, firmly embedded in Paul's theological system. According to orthodox Christians, the following ideas which I will attribute to Paul would be considered "heretical."

**Answer for yourself:** Why? Not only because they have been re-interpreted by orthodox fabricators from the close of the first century onward, ***but because the "Gnostic" quality of Paul's theology became too uncomfortable for the early Church Fathers.***

# PAUL'S CHRIST: THE ARCHETYPAL MAN

Many years ago it dawned upon me as my studies progressed that Paul's theology appears to be based on the central idea of the Heavenly or "Cosmic" Christ and not a historical human being. At first I was confused but that was before I undertook a few years later as I got around to it a serious, a very serious, investigation in Gnosticism and especially "Jewish" and "Christian Gnosticism". The more I read and studied Gnosticism and how the early Christian Gnostic appealed to Paul for their theology then it became clear to me that Paul knows Jesus not as a flesh and blood "Lord" but as the resurrected "anointed" of God who personifies what can be termed the Heavenly or "Archetypal Man." The teaching concerning the "Archetypal Man" has been ingeniously swept aside by the orthodox, but had surfaced in the Christian-Gnostic schools (which looked to Paul as their teacher) under the term "Anthropos," which in Greek means the Man or Primal Man. In the gospels Jesus is made to call himself "Son of Man." This phrase can be understood also as the "Son of the Primal Man." The Jesus of the authentic Pauline epistles is called "the Son or image of the Archetypal or spiritual Adam". According to ancient Hebrew sources such as the *Kabbalah*, the esoteric doctrine of Israel, this divine Archetypal Man was known as Adam Kadmon (Charles Ponce, *Kabbalah*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1983), pp. 134-142). The Adam Kadmon is God's attributes which appear in a human-like form.

Various Gnostic and hermetic concepts occur in the Jewish Cabbala and its Renaissance Christian variant: God is unlimited and cannot be grasped by human reason because he is without will, intention, longing, thought, language, and action. He is En Soph (the infinite), unknowable in his infinity and passive. Basically Kabbalah is based upon the teaching that the one living God, there's only one living God, has a variety of attributes, characteristics by which we can recognize him, that is that aspect of God, who descends low enough for human beings to be able to relate to Him. The epitome of God, the highest, the unlimited one, the infinite one, he is inscrutable. There is nothing about him that we can identify with, He has no attributes, we're incapable of comprehending Him. It is He who is descending in a manner by which He reveals himself little by little to mortal man, if we're willing to study and reach for Him.

The act of creation takes place in the unfolding of the ten divine emanations of God (En Soph), the Sephirot. The ten Sephiroth form Adam Kadmon, the archetypal man - comparable to the Hermetic Anthropos - the spiritual entity in whose image (Genesis 1:26) the Paradisical Adam is made. Sometimes, Adam Kadmon is the total of divine emanations in the ten Sephiroth, sometimes he consists of one emanation only, for instance Tiferet, beauty. Adam Kadmon is the most exalted manifestation of the godhead and can be approached to a certain extent through meditation.

We also find the term "Son of Man" in the books of Enoch, Daniel and throughout the New Testament, where it refers, esoterically, to the True, Ideal Man.

The Son of Man described in the *Book of Enoch* (3rd to 2nd century B.C.) is a pre-existent Messiah-figure who appears to be a divine personage bearing a divine "office." Enoch queries the angel in his vision of the Ancient of Days, asking who is the one whose "countenance resembled that of a man":

"He answered and said to me, This is the Son of Man, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt, and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed; for the Lord of Spirits has chosen him; and his portion has surpassed all before the Lord of Spirits in everlasting uprightness... [3] Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, his name [the Son of Man] was invoked in the presence of the Lord of Spirits. A support shall he be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon, without falling; and he shall be the light of nations. [4] He shall be the hope of those whose hearts are troubled. All, who dwell on earth, shall fall down and worship him; shall bless and glorify him, and sing praises to the name of The Lord of Spirits. [5] Therefore the Elect and The Concealed One existed in his [The Lord of Spirits]



presence, before the world was created, and forever. [6] In his presence he existed, and has revealed to the saints and to the righteous the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits;...(Brackets added.)" (The Book of Enoch, 46:2; 48:3-6 in Elizabeth C. Prophet, Forbidden Mysteries of Enoch, (Los Angeles: Summit University Press, 1983), pp. 128-130).

In Enoch this "Son of Man" is also termed the **"Messiah" and the "Elect"** who shall;

- **take command,**
- **be powerful upon earth and**
- **judge the kings and mighty men of the earth.**

**Answer for yourself:** Then do we see in the Book of Enoch that the "Messiah" is both an individual and a group of people as well? Yes, we sure do.

As we shall see in a few seconds, **Paul understood Jesus as the pre-existent, divine Son of Man who had taken incarnation on earth. Paul however uses the term "Christ" and not "Son of Man."** This divine figure descended to earth and became a man, as Paul describes:

*Phil 2:6-11 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice the word "likeness" when Paul was referring to Christ Jesus?

Strong's Concordance for the word "likeness":

3667 homoïoma (hom-oy'-o-mah); from 3666; a form; **abstractly, resemblance:** KJV-- **made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.**

Thayer's Greek Lexicon for the word "likeness":

3667 homoïoma- what has been made after the likeness of something

- a) a figure, a image, **a likeness, a representation**
- b) likeness that is, **resemblance**, such as amounts almost to equality or identity

**What you should notice is that Paul is saying that this "Christ Jesus" is from God but is only an abstract resemblance in the shape or similarity to mankind; only a representation of man!!!**

Now we have see this concept already in our study of Gnosticism where the Gnostic Christ was believed to be within each creature created in the image of God.

*Col 1:26-27 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

In his epistle to the Colossians, Paul further elaborates on his doctrine of the "Universal Christ," the Enochian Son of Man or Archetypal Man:

*Col 1:15-18 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice the word "image"?

The Strong's Concordance word for "image"?

1504 eikon (i-kone'); from 1503; a likeness, i.e. (literally) statue, profile, or (figuratively) representation, resemblance: KJV-- image.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this not the same idea we saw in Phillipians above? It sure is!

**Answer for yourself:** Where did Paul receive these ideas?

According to Biblical scholar, Hugh J. Schonfield, Paul studied the "occultism of the Pharisees," and specialized in the "Lore of Creation," which was in turn influenced by "Chaldean and platonic cosmogonical speculations, but these had been poured into a Jewish monotheistic mould" (Hugh J. Schonfield, Those Incredible Christians, (New York: Bantam, 1969), pp. 245-245). Paul, of course, also claimed to have received his doctrine from this Christ Jesus himself.

Schonfield elaborates on the meaning of Paul's teaching as follows and helps to illumine the above passage:

"The essential element in the teaching is that the visible universe conforms to a pattern or design, which represents the image of the Invisible God who, himself, has neither form nor substance. Man, the crown of creation, being made in the image of God, answers therefore completely to the original pattern, which thus may be conceived as a manlike figure. This primordial or Archetypal man, the "heavenly man" of Philo and the Adam Kadmon of the Jewish occultists, is the true image of God, the beginning of the creation and the Lord of it. Hence the first man on earth was given dominion over every living thing in it" (Ibid., p. 246).

Obviously, this concept of the Archetypal or heavenly Adam has been "lost" to modern Christianity.

**Answer for yourself:** But who is this Archetypal Man? Schonfield continues:

"We see man, therefore, as wearing physically the likeness of his spiritual Archetype, and that archetype is the expression of the nature of God....But for what purpose was man created? His creation must have had to do with the Messianic Plan, and the soul of Adam must have been knit with the soul of the ultimate Messiah [Christ]. It was therefore to be deduced that the archetypal or heavenly man was also the pre-existing spiritual counterpart of the Messiah, the heavenly Spirit-Christ. (Emphasis added.) (Ibid., pp. 246,247).

Schonfield then equates the "heavenly man" with the Enochian Son of Man, as described above, and states that Paul "regards the heavenly Messiah as the sole Messiah, who by an act of temporary redemptive renunciation became the man Jesus... the firstborn of all creation...." (Ibid., pp. 248-249).

If Schonfield's analysis is correct, the Jesus worshipped for centuries by orthodox Christians is not the Jesus of Paul but the Jesus constructed by Church Fathers and Church councils, e.g., the Council of Nicea.



Schonfield adds:

**"Paul's Christ is not God, he is God's first creation, and there is no room for the trinitarian formula of the Athanasian Creed nor for its doctrine that the Son was "not made, nor created, but begotten." But inasmuch as the visible universe is the expression of the Invisible God, the Christ, as first-product, comprises the whole of that expression in himself." (Emphasis added) (Ibid., p. 249).**

**According to Schonfield's interpretation of Paul's theology, not only is Jesus not God but, is in fact, Man, in his original spiritual state!**

Schonfield continues:

"Accepting with Paul the equation of the Messiah as the Adam Kadmon, it required that he should cast aside his glory and 'make himself small,...and initiate the restoration of harmony between man and God, and between the visible universe and the Invisible God. By the resurrection, there was restored in Jesus the light-body which the first man had possessed and forfeited, and the re-expansion of his stature in a manner comparable to that of the first man before the Fall. Thus ennobled and reintegrated with the Adam Kadmon, (Christ) Jesus was henceforth the Lord Jesus Christ." (Ibid., p. 250).

**Paul therefore distinguishes between the Heavenly Christ and the earthly manifestation of the likeness of he Adam Kadmon in the form of Christ Jesus who was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:3-4) It was through the resurrection that Jesus became the Son of God and thus restored man's true spiritual archetypal state.**

"...It is again evident that Paul did not think of Christ as God, only as being created in the image of God as the archetypal man and therefore having a godlike form....The heavenly Christ only took over when Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven (Ibid., p. 251).

**A thorough reading of Paul's epistles will confirm the relative accuracy of Schonfield's analysis of Paul's Christology. The authentic 7 epistles of Paul taught only this Cosmic Christ and not a human being as we have been led to believe do to the later forgery of the Second New Testament whereby this allegorical Christ is made to appear as if a historical human being.**

**It is impossible to construe from the above passages that Paul is referring solely to the historical Jesus, even in his resurrected state, as dwelling in the hearts of the faithful, especially in view of the fact that Paul continually uses the term, Perfect Man or inner man, and not Jesus Christ. It is clear that the Perfect Man is to be identified with the true or inner nature of man.**

This analysis is corroborated by Father John Rossner, author of In Search of the Primordial Tradition:

**"The term "Bar Nasha" or "Son of Man" refers to the "divine human form." An archetype of the human creation itself, it is the perfect Cosmic blueprint for all human beings. This was equated by some ancient writers with the "Logos" or eternal "image of God" that was said to be in every man that comes into the world" (John Rossner, In Search of the Primordial Tradition and the Cosmic Christ, (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1989), p. 189).**

In The Myth of God Incarnate, Frances Young, commenting on Paul's doctrine of the Son of God, writes:

This figure [the Son of God] is pre-existent not simply as a kind of divine being...but as the "man from heaven";... Indeed, he is the archetypal man and the archetypal Son of God in whom we become sons of God, fellow-heirs with Christ who will bear the image of the man of heaven ( John Hicks, ed., The Myth of God Incarnate, (Phil.: Westminster Press, 1977), "A Cloud of Witnesses"

by Frances Young, p. 21).

**The heavenly Christ and the appearance of the image of God as the likeness of man entitled Christ Jesus having become one Lord Jesus Christ is a teaching which has been branded as heretical and "Gnostic" by the orthodox fabricators of Christianity from the second century onwards.**

***Christ as the divine Archetype whom the believer should follow and thus attain to his own spiritual inheritance which was lost at the time of the fall, has itself become a lost teaching.***

And yet, the orthodox, by reinterpreting Paul and superimposing second- and third-century theology upon Paul's Christology whereby the Cosmic-Heavenly Christ has been transformed into a historical human being by gross forgery of the previous Gnostic First New Testament, have claimed him as their own.

## **CHRIST...THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF GOD**

This Christ whom Paul preaches is also an indwelling presence, a presence not confined solely to the image of the Christ Jesus which at one time appeared to mankind. Look at the following examples: After Paul had submitted himself to the "mystical crucifixion," Christ, as an inner presence, dwelt in him:

***"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. 4:6)***

Paul teaches that this indwelling Christ must be nurtured in the hearts of the faithful:

***"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19, emphasis added.)***

Paul prays to the Father for the members of his community at Ephesus:

***"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:16,17,19, emphasis added.)***

The nurturing and development of this indwelling Christ as the Divine Spark in the hearts of Paul's disciples results in the believer's transformation into the Archetypal Man called by Paul an inner man, perfect man or new man:

***"Till we all come in unity of the faith, and of the gnosis of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13)***

***"...Put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24)***

By accepting Paul's gospel then, man is restored to his true estate: a preexistent spiritual being, as Jesus likewise was restored through the resurrection.

**Answer for yourself:** How is this restoration to be accomplished?

**Paul answers:**



*"And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor.15:49)*

**This restoration to the heavenly image or heavenly Man was to be accomplished by means of the "resurrection of the dead."**

**This understanding of "the Christ" comes by knowledge (study) and a time of maturity.**

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*



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# PAULINE GNOSTIC CHRISTIANITY VS PETRINE MESSIANIC JUDAISM: THE HIDDEN STRUGGLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In a previous article I set out for the readers the fact that there are basically 3 different "theologies" and "Christs" in the New Testament which have under the influence and creativity of Rome been merged into one in the refutation of the First Gnostic New Testament. That being the case then understand that it is not a easy chore to sift through these prior competing theologies and come away with a concise and clear picture of not only "the Christ" but "Christ Jesus" as well as "Jesus" of the New Testament. For many that will be a very confusing statement but one which upon diligent study will become very clear over time. Let me summarize these 3 conflicting and competing voices before we begin:

- **James and the Jerusalem Church & Messianic Judaism** which taught and looked for a human descendant of King David who would be anointed for the task of a physical deliverance and salvation of Israel from the persecutions of the Gentiles and restoration to the past glories of the years of King David and in so doing help to begin the Kingdom of God on earth.
- **Marcion and Paul and Gnostic Christianity** which taught an allegorical "Christ within" and taught of a spiritual awakening and salvation of the soul within mankind through the coming to the awareness of the God within, man's true origin and his spiritual destiny, and the attendant responsibilities, both ethically and morally, that such an awareness of man's true identity brings to man who is created in the image of God.
- **Roman literalistic Christianity** who not only wins the wars against the Jews and Gnostics but builds upon both their beliefs the ultimate religious synthesis whereby the expected human messiah of Judaism is fused with the personified cosmic godman of sunworship [Essene theology] and presented as a "literalized" man and "fleshly Christ" in a historical timeline of Rome's making through their forgery of many religious "gospels" and "epistles" in names of Paul and other historical personalities from the Jerusalem Church. In so doing they literally back-wrote a "literalized" Christ as "Joshua-Jesus-Christ" and literalized the myths of Osiris-Dionysius and these became many of the stories and events of "the human Christ" we have in the New Testament. Lastly their continued forgery in Paul's name was to give the impression that Paul always believed and taught a fleshly Christ when in fact he did not and taught just the opposite and opposed those who were in his day and toward the end of his life beginning to teach a "fleshly Christ".

Bet Emet Ministries has made diligent effort to bring to the readers' attention in previous articles and [websites](#) that much of the basis of our Canonical Gospels is, to a large extent, mythical, and that the Gnosis of Ancient Egypt was carried into other lands by the underground passage of the Mysteries, to emerge at last as the literalized legend of Historic Christianity.



To quote Gerald Massey in his Nature Genesis *"the mythical Christ was as surely continued from Egypt as were the mythical types of the Christ on the Gnostic Stones and in the Catacombs of Rome"*. Once one's studies have encompassed a through study of Egyptian religion as the foundation for all other world religions which will find their life through Egypt (and this included both both Judaism and Christianity as well as all others) then one sees for himself once he then undertakes a serious study of comparative religions the very clear chronological evolution of the earliest revelations of God to man given in the beginning to the Ancients in Egypt. This original understanding of God as expressed by the Ancients in Egypt in Thebes, Memphis, Heliopolis, and Hermopolis can be traced in various stages of degradation down through time in comparative religious studies which are necessary if one is to ever get to the real origins of Judaism and Christianity. If one does then great study then he or she will benefit and see what few who live as Christians ever see; namely more to the point, that Paul's Epistles and theology as he originally taught it in his 7 authentic Epistles expresses the very kernal of Egyptian thought concerning God and His "Christ". This mind you is expressed by Paul originally in his 7 authentic Epistles through allegory and metaphors which Rome will later "literalize" in Paul's name and in the names of other personages from the Jerusalem Messianic synagogue. In so doing Rome create for the first time a historical human Christ! Today Rome's corruption of the Gnostic First New Testament has complete distorted the Ancient understanding of "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ" almost beyond correct understanding except to those who pay the price to wade through so much conflicting theology and sift it and organize it. When one does this great task then they will see what I am sharing today: that there are 3 voices and 3 "Christs" all rolled into one in the New Testament. Today we have to face a problem that is one of the most difficult; it is my calling to share the truth concerning the New Testament and in so doing reveal that Paul was the opponent and not the apostle of Historic Christianity which would teach a literalized "Jesus Christ" and even claim Paul as one of their own. Extra-Biblical records available to us today shout this message concerning the authentic Paul over and over again and few ever read them or are aware of their existence. How ironic in light of what in-depth study of both the current New Testament and the earlier corruption of the Gnostic First New Testament can reveal. Let us not be mistaken by this; namely, that Rome gave to the world in their refutation of Gnostic Christianity and the earliest followers of "the Christ within" a false Christ and a false document that completely distorts what the earliest believers in "the Christ" really believed let alone as well what Messianic Judaism expected in their hoped-for Messiah.

## THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FIRST TWO COMPETING VOICES & THE FIRST TWO "CHRISTS" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I remember it well setting in class in Seminary one day as the Professor casually mentioned the "Paul-Petrine Problem" and the "Tubigen School" of Europe and he moved on to another topic. *"What Paul-Peter problem"* I thought to myself. I would have to wait till after graduation to begin my own serious study of such things I heard in Seminary as my plate was full with current studies, ministry, family, and a job. Having said that I would later look seriously into this "Peter-Paul Problem" and the "Tubigen School" after Seminary and my studies into such areas of controversy and the results of such through investigation are made known in Bet Emet's articles and [websites](#).

It is well known to all serious students of the subject that there was an original rent or rift of difference between the preacher Paul and the other founders of Christianity, whom he first met in Jerusalem--namely, Cephas (or Peter), James, and John. Paul, according to what we believe he actually wrote himself, did not think much of them personally as the Galatians Epistle make clear, but scoffs a little at their pretensions to being Pillars of the Church.

*Gal 2:6-12 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was*



*committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*

Opposite of what Rome will present to the world in their latter corruptions of the earliest New Testament Gnostic writings collected by Marcion which contained the authentic letters of Paul, those men from the Jerusalem Messianic congregation or Church had nothing in common with Paul from the first and neither he with them, and never forgave him for his independence and opposition to the last. That is why Paul's Epistles are full of his defense of his "apostleship" in light of his rejection by the Jerusalem congregation which we see throughout the whole of the New Testament and the book of Acts. Considering Paul's past, it should not be surprising that Paul was not readily accepted by the Jerusalem synagogue having previously been a Sadducee since it was only Sadducees or those who were in their employ who could arrest and imprison others:

*Acts 8:3 says, "But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison."*

*Acts 9:26 says, "And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple."*

But the depth of that visible rift has not yet been fathomed in consequence of false assumptions by most; and my own researches and determination to look and think for myself have led me to the inevitable conclusion that there is but one way in which it can be bottomed for the first time. That is through the presentation of hard hitting facts dug from historical investigation that is obtained by many long nights and months of dedicated study.

Having done so for not only months but years of such dedicated study into such areas which most Christians never know about less study it is beyond any doubt that two voices are heard contending in Paul's Epistles which we have today, to the confounding of the writer's sense and the confusion of the reader's. They utter different doctrines, so fundamentally opposed as to be for ever irreconcilable; and this duplicity of doctrine makes Paul, who is the one distinct and single-minded personality of the "New Testament," look like the most double-faced of men; double-tongued as the serpent.

I need to explain something before we go any further. Up to now many of Bet Emet's websites deal with the "literal Paul" and his writings which are contradictory to say the least. For after all that is the way we have received them and told to interpret them since childhood. If these Pauline Epistles are taken "literally" then they are possibly the world's most confusing and conflicting religious document to have ever existed as our Websites show. If one takes them at face value then Paul is schizophrenic to say the least or Paul seems to have multiple theologies spewing from his mouth and pen and often on the same "page" of his Epistles. It is a nightmare to try to keep these conflicting statements of Paul let alone to reconcile with normative conservative Judaism. I have presented up to now Paul the "literalist" on my websites and shown how he is in conflict with Judaism and make no mistake about it that this is true.

The truth claims of the various religions contradict each other, logically they cannot all be equally true. The same can be said for "sects" within one religion as a whole. Judaism is a perfect example. Particular religions might share certain truths in common (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all monotheistic); nevertheless, because of the real differences that exist, only one religion would be completely true or at least truer than the rest. This is what we have before us when Paul is examined through the microscope of Gnosticism. We see that Judaism in the first century was made up of many competing sects [Essenes, Sadducees, Pharisees, Gnostics, 4th Philosophy, etc., to name just a few] which raised their voices with different theological agendas. Each expressed



the "truth" as they saw it. What I wish to deal with in this article is not the Essenes but normative Judaism which looked for an anointed human descendant of David to restore the glories of Israel. Likewise I wish to focus as well on the Gnostic Paul and contrast their messages which we find woven together in the New Testament in such a way as to blur the "Jewish Christ-Messiah" from the "Gnostic Christ".

However it is time to paint Paul as the Gnostic he truly was as our investigations and the fruits of recent archeological discovery has shown in the last one hundred or so years. Due to the forgery of so much of the Pauline Epistles by Rome whereby they introduced a "fleshly Christ" as opposed to the "allegorical Christ" that Paul originally taught we come away from a scrutiny of Paul confused as we first try to reconcile the contradictory statements of Paul in our minds with limited success. Trust me I have been as many of our current reader over Paul but as your study goes deeper into Gnosticism then the true Paul emerges and a truer picture of the competing theologies of the First Century emerges which is confirmed by present day archeology findings. Let it be said in the beginning of this article that there are a total of 3 voices in the New Testament that emerge on the pages of this one book and all of them are advocating their groups understanding of God and a "hoped for" redeemer.

- James and the Jerusalem Church & Messianic Judaism [both Essenic and Pharisaic Judaism]
- Marcion and Paul and Gnostic Christianity
- Roman literalistic Christianity

The task before the reader and student is to clearly understand each and the different "Christs" they espoused and be able to discern them separately when reading the New Testament and in so doing see how the New Testament which we have received today is a book given us from the "blender" of Romanism.

## THE GNOTIC OR SPIRITUAL CHRIST VS THE HISTORIC JEWISH MESSIAH OF NORMATIVE JUDAISM....PETER VS PAUL

Well there you have it and each of these above "theologies" are scattered across the pages of our New Testaments; some mixed on the same pages no less and we readers, lacking such insights and through comprehension of Judaism, Gnosticism, and literalized sunworship from both the Essenes and Rome grab our New Testaments handed down by Roman Church Tradition and head off to church and read only a passage or two of this fusion of Ancient contending theologies never knowing that we have jumbled and mixed-up theological mess bound in black leather which we are told to consider "holy".

Let us begin at the beginning before Rome gets into this theological fight between Judaism and Gnosticism. By that I mean let us focus only on the first "two" voices and "two Christs" before Rome gets into the fray. The two doctrines for our concern that contended for mastery in the beginning as found in first century Judaism are those concerning Gnosticism which espoused a "Spiritual Christ", and normative conservative Messianic Judaism which espoused a historic Messiah.

**Answer for yourself:** What do both of these "Christ" or "Anointed" have in common right up front?

They were both a manifestation of "Joshua" or "Jesus". "Yahweh is Salvation" is the meaning of both "Joshua" in Hebrew and "Jesus" in Latin (THINK). You see both words mean "Yahweh is Salvation" and in their own unique way both the "Gnostic Christ" (found both in Judaism and in Gentile mystery religions) and the "human Messiah" of Judaism were to bring "Yahweh's Salvation"; one a Spiritual Salvation and one a combination of a Political-Spiritual Salvation as we find in normative Judaism. If you have been diligent to read the other articles in this website then you now understand how the [Exodus Allegory](#) made such an dramatic impression on the Jewish ancients.

## *What we need to understand is that both of these "Christs" reveal Divine Truth but yet not the same way....*

It might help the reader to at this time understand just what the Messiah was to do for Israel. As stated above normative Judaism awaited a anointed human as their Messiah. There were also other fringe movements that were schismatics that looked for a Cosmic-godman of sorts like the Essenes but that is not our focus at this time as we need to understand that normative Judaism looked for one from the human lineage of David to come to their rescue as their "anointed" from God for their political salvation since the Jewish nation understood that their spiritual salvation comes from the Torah and righteous living. Having said that understand as well that these two entities [the Gnostic Christ and the Jewish Messiah] are not the same to Paul and Marcion and the Gnostics. This helps us explain Paul when he says that others, and in particular, the Jerusalem Synagogue for which he shows disdain in Galatians chapter 2, teach "another Joshua-Jesus" or "another Jesus". The human Jewish Messiah who is "anointed" or a "Christ" in his own right is not the "Gnostic Christ" of Paul; yet they are both "Christs". Now you are beginning to see what I am talking about since you now understand the real use of the name "Jesus-Joshua" as used in Judaism in the First Century. Don't let us be confused about the name Jesus as we have in earlier articles explained how the name "Jesus" was understood in the first century quite differently from the way it is today. "Jesus" is the Latin of the Hebrew "Joshua" which simply meant in the first century "Yahweh is Salvation" [Strong's Number 3091].

Both of these "Christs" cannot be true to Paul; and having done comprehensive study into both Judaism, Gnosticism, and New Testament manuscripts and their corruption during the early centuries of the Gentile Roman Church over the last ten or more years the only conclusion that a "thinking believer" can come to having seen all the evidence from these sources and studies is that both these competing voices and theologies concerning the two "Christs" did not proceed from Paul; only the Spiritual manifestation of the "Christ within" can be attributed to Paul and the other "human Christ" of Judaism finds its home in Messianic Judaism. Only later when these two are combined as such by Rome do we then find a 3rd voice expressing a 3rd Christ which is not true to either Messianic Judaism nor Gnostic Christianity as it was taught by Paul, Marcion, and others which came after them.

We know that Paul and the other Apostles [the Jerusalem Church] did not preach the same gospel; and it is my present purpose to show that they did not set forth or celebrate the same Christ. The truth is that Paul did not teach a Jewish Messiah per se. But what you need to grasp in light of the Pauline forgeries in our New Testaments is the fact that although Paul was not concerned with the appearing of the Jewish Messiah he certainly would not have been a supporter of the system known as Historical Christianity today which teaches a "fleshly Jesus Christ" which for Paul was only an allegory of the Christ working within mankind. It would be this 3rd voice which will give rise to a belief in the Christ carnalized and "literalized"; an assumption that the Christ had been made flesh. The authentic Paul and his authentic Epistles reveal, when only considering them and "the Christ" taught within them, that Paul would have been during his lifetime an unceasing and deadly opponent of this Roman "fleshly Jesus" or a "fleshly Christ". Here is the facts that cannot be disproved today; namely that History and archeology and comparative New Testament manuscript studies reveal that after Paul's death his writings were tampered with, interpolated, filled in, interjected, and re-indoctrinated by a "third voice" that enters this theological mix of conservative Messianic Judaism and Gnostic Christianity. It is only after Paul's death that we find that these later forged Pauline Epistles are made to teach anti-Gnostic doctrines like a "fleshly Christ Jesus". Those proto-Catholic forgers are the evilest and vilest of theological opponents, the forgers and falsifiers, who first began to "literalize" the Gnostic Christ and forge this concept with the idea of the Jewish Messiah and out of such mixture comes the golden calf of the "Cosmic Godman Messiah " of Essene influenced Roman Western Christianity. This idolatrous concept from Roman sunworship wins the theological war hands down due to the power of mighty Rome and the power of the



"pen" which is backed up both militarily and by fear of damnation held over the heads of the ignorant masses. With the later production of these written forged documents which end up in our New Testaments we come away with a "Frankenstein" instead of a clear picture of an expected Jewish Messiah along with the spiritual understanding of the salvation of the soul as taught through Gnostic myths that captured for all time unspeakable truths about the Spirit of God and His workings within the hearts and souls of men. Instead our "Roman Frankenstein Messiah" is a mixture of Gnosticism, Jewish Messianism, and sunworship literalized and as stated before the unlearned have no hope of ever discerning the difference and "casting out the leaven" of such forgery and idolatry. This should now explain why the Jews won't accept our New Testament which is replete with forgeries of their own Hebrew Scriptures let alone which depicts a false and non-Jewish Messiah. They know better; we don't.

In this way there was added a third "voice" or corner-stone to the original two in Jerusalem. The supreme feat, performed in secret by the managers of the Mysteries in Rome, was this conversion of the Epistles of Paul into the main support of Historic Christianity through blatant forgery of existing Pauline writings and the pure invention of others which espoused a "literalized and carnal Christ" which Paul never taught originally! Understand that forgery of the Pauline Epistles is the very pivot on which the total deception concerning "the Christ" turned! In his lifetime Paul had fought tooth and nail, with tongue and pen, against the men who founded the faith of the Christ made flesh, and damned eternally all disbelievers; and after his death they would rear the False Church over his legacy through forgery, and for eighteen centuries have, with a forged warrant, claimed him as being the first and foremost among the founders. What a lie once you study to see it for yourself. Through deception and forgery Paul will be made to look as if he supported, believed in, and taught a "fleshly Jesus" and a "literalized Christ" when nothing further from the truth could ever be said. Once you study Judaism along with its apostate Essenes, Gnosticism, and the facts concerning the New Testament and its continual emendation and additions and continual forgery by Rome.

## PAUL'S CONVERSION....DARE WE LOOK CLOSE?

It is the universal assumption that Paul, the persecutor of the early Christians, was converted by a vision of the risen Jesus, who proved his historic nature and identity by appearing to Paul in person. So it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever compared the conversion accounts of Paul for yourself? Are you aware that the account of Paul's conversion in the Book of Acts, thought by many scholars to be a second century documents, contradicts Paul's personal account in his authentic Epistle to the Galatians?

The account, however, is entirely opposed to that which is given by Paul himself in his Epistle to the Galatians.

*Gal 1:15-16 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (KJV)*

He tells how the change occurred, which has been called his conversion.

**Answer for yourself:** How did it occur according to Paul?

It was by revelation of the Christ within, but not by an objective vision of a personal Jesus, who demonstrated in spirit world the reality and identity of an historic Jesus of Nazareth, who had lately lived on earth. Such a version as that is rigorously impossible, according to Paul's own words. His account of the matter is totally contradictory to the account in the book of Acts. He received his commission to preach the

Christ, as he declares, "*when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me [notice Paul did not say "to me" but "within me"]*," and therefore not by an apparition of Jesus of Nazareth outside of him! His Christ within was not the core of later Christian belief, but the Christ of the Gnosis. He heard no voice external to himself, which could be converted into the audible voice of an historic Jesus; and nothing can be more instructive to begin with, than a comparative study of these two versions, for showing how the true religious beliefs of the Gnostic Paul and his assumed conversion has been manipulated, and the facts perverted, for the purpose of establishing or supporting an orthodox history. What he did hear when caught up in the spirit he tells us was unspeakable; words which it is not lawful for a man to utter! Paul never makes mention of a Jesus of Nazareth in his authentic writings. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth is unknown to Paul! His name never once appears in the Epistles; and the significance of the fact in favor of the present view can hardly be exaggerated.

The name of "Jesus of Nazareth" does not appear in the First New Testament and the Gospel of Marcion either and Marcion we remember just happens to be the strongest advocate of the Gnostic Paul that we could ever find since Marcion states that only Paul understood "the Christ" correctly. In combating this fact in their day the Christian Fathers, when cornered on this fact of the absence of "Jesus of Nazareth" from the earliest writings of Paul which made up most of the First New Testament, charged Marcion in removing the the name of Jesus of Nazareth from his particular Gospel--being so virulent a heretic! Yet here we find the early and authentic Paul in agreement with Marcion, the Gnostic rejecter of Jesus of Nazareth, and of historic Christianity. We also saw in an earlier article that Marcion's "Gospel" was the earliest Gospel foundation from which the later Gospel of Luke will be taken which teaches us that Marcion's Christ was the earliest Christ of the Christian Church. As if that was not enough let us never forget that Paul was the only apostle of the true Christ who was recognized by Marcion. Now, as Marcion had rejected the human nature of the Christ of Rome's making, and left the sect which ultimately became the church of historic Christianity. Having understood all of this as it has been so far presented than it is impossible that Marcion could have adopted or upheld the Epistles of Paul and a "Pauline literalized Christ" as it has come down to us in our current version of the Epistles. Hence, Irenaeus complains that Marcion dismembered the Epistles of Paul, and removed those passages from the prophetic writings which had been quoted to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord! That is, Marcion, the man who knew & recognized his fellow-Gnostic in Paul, but rejected the literalizations and the spurious doctrines which had been secretly inserted by these proto-Catholic founders, who were the forgers of Historic Christianity which we have inherited today. Further, with regard to the Marcionites, Irenaeus says the Marcionites allege that Paul alone, of all the Christian teachers, knew the truth; and that to him the Mystery was manifested by revelation. These Marcionites spoke as Gnostics of a Gnostic and that Gnostic was Paul.

Now let us hear the words of an early Church Father that is not cut from the current mold and who give us a more truthful picture of the events handed down to us by Rome. Clement Alexander asserts that Paul, before going to Rome, stated that he would bring to the Brethren not the true Gospel history, but the Gnosis, or Gnostic communication, the tradition of the hidden mysteries, as the fullness of the blessings of Christ, which Clement says were revealed by the Son of God, the "teacher who trains the Gnostic by mysteries," i.e., by revelations made in the state of trance. He was going there as a Gnostic, and therefore as the natural opponent of Historic Christianity.

Now let us examine more closely Paul's supposed conversion.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you put on your thinking hats yet? You may need one for the following example. The conversion of Paul, according to the Acts, is supposed to have occurred sometime after the year 30 A.D. at the earliest; and yet if we accept the data furnished by the book of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he must have been converted as early as the year 27 A.D. Paul states that after his conversion he did not go up to



Jerusalem for three years. Then after 14 more years he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This second visit can be dated by means of the famine, which is historic, and known to have occurred in the year 44, at which time relief was conveyed to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Paul. If we take 17 years from 44, the different statements go to show that Paul had been converted as early as the year 27. Thus, according to the dates and the data derived from the Acts, from Paul's epistle, and the historic fact of the famine, **Paul was converted to Christianity in the year 27 of our era!**

**Answer for yourself:** What was Paul supposedly converted to then if Jesus was not dead yet in the year 27 A.D./C.E.? Why did not Paul go up to Jerusalem and hold a conversation with Jesus personally since by all Christian scholarly accounts he is yet alive at this time? What does this whole deception teach us or should teach us? Well first of all that what we are reading in our New Testaments given to us by Rome might not be true and we have to dig out the truth from other sources available to us today.

**This could not have been by a spiritual manifestation of the supposed personal Jesus to Paul, who was not then dead, and had not at that time been re-begotten as the Christ of the canonical history.** This is usually looked upon (by Renan, for example,) as such an absurdity that no credence can be allowed to the account in the Acts. **Such a supposed conversion by its own account is dubious if not an impossibility; whether you look at Galatians and the conversion account which evidently is forged as well or the book of Acts and its conversion account. This betrays the action of textual forgers trying to write into history and the texts grounds and support for their religious beliefs long after Paul is dead. Study reveals Paul was a Gnostic and not an advocate in the Historical Jesus of Rome's invention.** You cannot date one event by another which never occurred, or, if it did occur, is not recorded by Paul, especially when his own account offers negative evidence of its non-occurrence. It is only using plain words justifiably to say that the creators of the Acts of the Apostles falsify whenever it is convenient, and tell the truth when they cannot help it!

**Answer for yourself:** Well if Paul supposedly did not want to visit a still-alive Jesus at the time of his supposed "conversion" then why would he not want to see those of who followed him; his apostles and disciples?

In Paul's own account of his conversion he continues: ***"Immediately, I conferred not with the flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia."***

**Answer for yourself:** Dare we detect in Paul's mention and disdain for "flesh" more of his Gnostic thought? More than likely "yes".

It is recorded for us that **Paul did not seek to know anything about the personal Jesus of Nazareth, his life, his miracles, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; had no anxiety to hear anything whatever from living witnesses or relatives about the human nature of this Divine Being, who is supposed to have appeared to Paul in person; completely changed the current of his life, and transformed his character; no wish even to verify the historic or possible ground-work for the reality of his alleged vision of Jesus!**

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you find that amazingly strange?

When reading the accounts of the New Testament we are told that when he did go up to Jerusalem, three years afterwards, and again in fourteen years, he positively learned nothing whatever from those who ought to have been able to teach him and tell him all things on matters of vital importance (for *historic* Christianity), about which he should have been most desirous to know, but had no manifest desire of knowing. We are told in Galatians chapter 2 that Paul saw James, Peter, and John, who were the pillars of the church and persons of repute, but whatever they were it made no matter to him; they imparted nothing to him. He says these respectable persons, these pillars, who seemed to be somewhat, communicated nothing to him; contrariwise, it

was he who had a gospel of his own, which he had received from no man, to communicate to them! These accounts need to be understood correctly for they depict contrary to what you might have supposed up to now that Paul had come to bring them the Gnosis. They privately gave him the hand of fellowship, and offered to acknowledge him if he would keep out of their way with his other gospel--go to the Gentiles and leave them alone. There was a compromise, and therefore something to compromise, though not on Paul's account; but the only point of genuine agreement between them was that they agreed to differ! On comparing notes, Paul found that the Jerusalem Synagogue were preaching quite another gospel, and another Jesus.

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that Paul, when speaking of another Joshua or Jesus (in Hebrew Joshua means "Yahweh is Salvation" and Jesus is Latin for "Yahweh is Salvation), has in mind a spiritual salvation as taught by the Gnostics and the Jerusalem Church another salvation from Yahweh in the person of a human Messiah? Most likely yes. Both were speaking and looking for "salvation" but one political-military and the other in the souls of men.

Let us not again get confused on the name "Jesus" or else we will miss completely the historical understanding of the events alluded to. Messianic Judaism was looking for the coming of the Jewish Messiah as an "anointed one" from God that would deal with the persecutors of Israel. As stated the Jerusalem Church was well aware of Gnostic Judaism.

We know what the gospel of the Jewish Messianics consisted of for it has come down to us in the doctrines and dogmas of a mutated historic Christianity. It was the gospel of this 3rd voice; one of the literalizers of mythology; the gospel of the Christ made flesh to save mankind from an impossible fall; the gospel of salvation by the atoning blood of Christ; the gospel that would make a hell of this life, on purpose to win heaven hereafter; the gospel of flesh and physics, including the corporeal resurrection, and the immediate ending of the world; the gospel that has no other world except at the end of this. The gospel of this 3rd voice was but another gospel with its doctrines of delusion, against which Paul would have waged continual warfare but in his place other Gnostics did for almost 5 centuries. For, another Jesus, another Spirit, and another gospel were first being preached by these pre-eminent men of the Jerusalem synagogue-church who were the opponents of Paul. He warns the Corinthians against those "pre-eminent apostles," whom he calls false prophets, deceitful workers, and ministers of Satan, who came among them to preach "another Jesus" whom he did not preach, and a different gospel from that which they had received from him. Ironically we never dreamed that Paul could ever be referring to the Jerusalem Church in these passages but he certain has them in view in his epistles. To the Galatians he says: *"If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be damned;"* or let him be Anathema. He chides them: *"O, foolish, Galatians, who did bewitch you? Are ye so foolish: having begun in the Spirit, are ye perfected in the flesh?"*

**Answer for yourself:** Could this again be a signal to us that Paul is gnostic and let us remember the Gnostics saw no benefit to the flesh since flesh, being matter, contained only evil?

That is, in the gospel of the Christ made flesh, whether this "flesh" referred to a human Messiah or a Cosmic-Godman of Rome's making, the gospel of these others was enmity toward him. It would be they who followed on his track like Satan sowing tares by night to choke the seed of the spiritual gospel which Paul had so painfully sown, and who, as he intimates to the Thessalonians, were quite capable of forging epistles in his name to deceive his followers. It has never yet been shown how fundamental was this feud between Paul and the forgers of the fleshly faith, because the real facts had not been grappled with or grasped concerning the totally different bases of belief, and the forever irreconcilable gospels of the Gnostic or spiritual Christ, and of the Christ made flesh who is set forth as the Savior of mankind according to Historic Roman Christianity.

It was impossible that Paul and Peter should draw or pull together; the different grounds of their faith were in



the beginning from pole to pole apart. He says: *"I made known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man (or from a man), nor was I taught it, save through revelation of the Christ revealed within."*

He did not derive his facts from history, nor his gospel from the Apostles; he was neither taught by man nor book. **Paul derived his gospel from direct personal revelation of the Christ within. This is Gnosticism!!! In short, his Christ was not that Jesus of Nazareth whom he never mentions nor the one suspiciously absent for the First Gnostic New Testament of 140 C.E. Once you see this and understand Paul's "Christ" is not the one that the Jerusalem Church-Synagogue preached and not the "historical Jesus" of Rome's production and once you do a comprehensive study of the true origin of the New Testament and its canonization which includes manuscript evidences that reveal the changes, omissions, additions, inventions, etc., of our texts in the New Testament over the earliest centuries of the Gentile Roman Church *then you will understand* in light of the absence in the earliest First New Testament of the Gnostic Christians of the:**

- **genealogies of Jesus Christ**
- **the birth narratives of Jesus**
- **the infancy narratives of Jesus**

**and the later inclusions in 180 C.E. of:**

forged Epistles in Paul's name (Pastoral Epistles for instance) which make Paul give an anti-Gnostic slant to his theology when his earlier authentic Epistles teach just the opposite

Gospel forgeries in the names of the dignitaries of the Jerusalem Church-synagogue that have been used and created in order to futher the transformation of the "Gnostic Christ" into the "historical Christ", which had been understood "allegorically" since time immemorial.

By such cunning and deception and literary falsity and forgery the "Gnostic Christ" of Egypt and Paul was turned into a "historical being" which was placed in a historical time line by Rome in their ultimate religious synthesis where they fused together in "one person":

- **The Jewish Messiah**
- **The Gnostic Christ**

Once you study and see these New Testament forgeries for yourself which are chronicled by numerous scholars of the past centuries as well as the present and factor in the harsh reality and fact from your own study which will reveal to you that any existing historical evidence for a historical Jesus Christ that exists today outside this one book, the New Testament, is of a highly dubious nature or a forgery as shown by scholars today. When all this is done the "thinking believer" can see very clearly that this "evidence" for a "historical Jesus Christ" as a "human being" was manufactured and often invented along with forgery of historical records like Josephus for example and Suetonius and Pliny, etc.. Once all these things are factored together such as Egyptian study, Comparative religious study and a through understanding of Sun Worship, Gnosticism, study of the apostate Essenes and the Inter-Testamental Literature, the forgery of the Hebrew Scriptures when translated into Greek by these Essenes, the authentic Pauline Epistles and the Gnostic Christ, Marcion and the collection of the First Gnostic New Testament, the later refutation of Marcion's New Testament by Rome and the later invention of much New Testament writings along with forgery of existing Epistles, then it is not hard to see the puzzle come together for the "thinking believer. What we have is the fabrication of the New Testament "Jesus Christ" where Rome has taken the allegories and myths of the Ancients since Egypt and turned these "allegories" and "symbols" into a "literal history" of a man who never existed and created his life around the "literalization" of the events of the allegories taught about the Pagan gods and goddesses. Let me close with this reminder that is of immeasurable importance. Don't discount these myths and allegories of the Ancients when understood "allegorically" and not "literally". On prior websites Bet Emet has shown the fallacy of the "literalization" of

these myths but on our Egypt site I show the truth of these "myths" when understood "allegorically". In my opinion when one fully understands Egypt and Egyptian Religion CORRECTLY then there is not a truer expression of God on this planet! Sadly we have been taught to approach these "Pagan Myths" again "literally" but when they are seen "allegorically" and as "metaphors" that capture for all time "Divine and unspeakable truths" of the Creator then they shine in all their splendor and often are breathtaking in their simplicity and honest truth. Again these "myths" that capture "Divine Truth" must be understood as the Ancients who formed them understood them and in so doing we see God as never before; untainted by the fictional creation of mankind who molds God after their dreams of power and conquest. These Ancient myths capture the workings of the Divine and His laws that order the Cosmos and the Universe and reveal Him and His ways to all mankind. This "order" and "law" was captured in myth by the Ancients and the messenger to mankind of this Revelation was "the Christ within" and not "without". This is the sad truth kept from us today and no greater tragedy is that we never see this misrepresentation of "the Christ" in Rome's New Testament when reading the "literalized synthesis" of this "Jesus Christ".





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## THE TUBIGEN SCHOOL...NOTICING THE JAMES/PETER VS PAULINE SPLIT

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a conservative school of theology existed at Tübingen fostered by G C Storr (1746 - 1805) that stressed the supernatural character of revelation and biblical authority. Also, a Catholic "Tübingen school" attempted in the late nineteenth century to reconcile the church's teaching with modern philosophy and biblical studies. By far the best known, however, is the one headed by Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792 - 1860), which opened up new avenues in NT study and was the most controversial movement in biblical criticism in the midnineteenth century. Its major contribution was calling attention to the distinct strands and theologies within the NT itself and establishing the principle of a purely historical understanding of the Bible.

The contrasts between the Synoptic Gospels and John, the various letters attributed to Paul, and Paul and the other early church leaders were carefully examined. Baur, much influenced by idealist philosophy, applied Hegelian dialectic to the NT. He found that the New Testament reflected, not a homogeneous development, but a fundamental tension between the Jewish church of Peter/James and the hellenistic Gentile church of Paul. The NT documents attempted to reconcile the conflict between an earlier Petrine and a **later** conflicting Pauline theology by formulating a new synthesis (making it appear as if the Apostles supported Paul when earliest church historians record that they did not). Baur believed that the authenticity of the various books could be determined by the degree to which they revealed "tendencies" of this conflict. He also traced out a similar kind of dialectical movement in the history of the church.

Ferdinand Christian Baur, b. June 21, 1792, d. Dec. 2, 1860, was a German theologian who founded the Tübingen school of New Testament interpretation. He received his education at Tübingen University, where, from 1826 to his death, he was professor of ecclesiastical and doctrinal history. Although Baur began teaching at Tübingen in 1826, the school's founding is properly dated from the appearance of his pupil D F Strauss's Life of Jesus in 1835. By the late 1840s the Tübingen School came under severe attack and the various members gradually drifted away. Baur himself became isolated within the Tübingen faculty as well as the German academic community, and spent his last years defending his views and producing a multivolume history of the church from a naturalistic standpoint, which explained all events by a combination of political, social, cultural, and intellectual causes but without any consideration of divine influence. Although relatively short - lived, the school with its emphasis on dialectical conflict within the early church, rejection of Pauline authorship of most of his epistles, and completely antisupernaturalistic outlook contributed significantly to the development of a historical - critical approach to the Bible that completely ignored the divine element in it.

As stated above Baur applied the philosophy of Hegel to New Testament interpretation. He was thus an early advocate of the historical or scientific study of the Bible. In 1845 he published a book on St. Paul, in which

**he applied the Hegelian principle to the history of early Christianity: Primitive Jewish (Petrine) Christianity, represented by the Gospel of St. Matthew, was the original force or thesis; Pauline Christianity was the antithesis or reaction against Peter - Matthew; and early Catholic Christianity, which brought these two forces together, was the synthesis.** In the process, Baur rejected the traditional attribution of a number of Epistles to Paul. He held that Paul was the author only of Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and most of Romans. Later Baur wrote extensively on historical theology. He developed a school of followers, mostly at Tübingen; but the movement declined with his death but the truth of his "thesis" has been borne out by subsequent study into this very interesting topic.

**(J Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy* (1974); R M Grant, *The Bible in the Church* (1954); N Harris, *The Tübingen School*; P C Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of F C Baur*; K Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*; A Heron, *A Century of Protestant Theology*; C Brown, *N I D C* C , 987.**





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# PAUL'S CONVERSION AS DEPICTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...IS IT TRUSTWORTHY OR SHOULD WE BE SUSPICIOUS?

Imagine yourself as a juror at a criminal trial. The defense has called three witnesses to back up the defendant's story. In their testimony, all three witnesses claim the same thing; namely, that they HEARD the defendant talking with another person but that they DID NOT SEE the other person. Then suppose that a couple of days later these same three witnesses are cross-examined. In their testimony, they claim just the opposite: that they SAW the defendant talking with another person but that they DID NOT HEAR the conversation. At one point, they claim to have heard but not seen the other person, while later they claim to have seen but not heard the other person. Most jurors would find that this contradictory testimony throws a great deal of suspicion on the veracity of these witnesses and what other they might have to say. This would most likely cause the jurors to disregard the witnesses' support of the defendant.

**Answer for yourself:** But what are we to do when we find such contradiction in the New Testament surrounding the Apostle Paul and should we be very careful in accepting other things he has to say? You better be!

## NEW TESTAMENTS ACCOUNTS OF THE CONVERSION OF PAUL AND THE DISCREPANCIES...WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

With this in mind, let us examine an account recorded for us in the New Testament and take a look at the biblical account of the conversion of Saul.

*As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, suddenly a light from the sky flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:3-6)*

And later supposedly in Paul's own words.

*As I was traveling and coming near Damascus, about midday a bright light from the sky flashed suddenly around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 22:6-7)*

These two descriptions, one in the third person and one in the first person, are virtually identical. No problem yet. At this point, however witnesses are brought in to verify the story. Remembering the description of the witnesses in the imagined criminal trial, take a look at the testimony of witnesses to the alleged conversion of Saul.

First in Acts 9:

***The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they HEARD the voice but COULD NOT SEE ANYONE. (Acts 9:7)***

**Now I challenge you to compare this with the account in Acts 22 and see if it is the same:**

***The men with me SAW the light, but did not hear the voice of the one speaking to me. (Acts 22:9)***

**Answer for yourself:** Do these accounts contradict each other? Sure do.

**If you apply the same evidentiary standards to this biblical report as most people would in a trial situation, you would find that the testimony is, at the very least, called into question by the disparity of these two accounts.**

Thus, the testimony of the witnesses is called into question to say the least!

**NOW LETS QUOTE PAUL AND SEE IF HE CONTRADICTS HIMSELF:**

**Answer for yourself:** But what about the testimony of Paul himself?

**In Acts 22 and Acts 26, the author (Luke) indicates that he is actually *quoting* Paul rather than merely describing the conversion as he did in Acts 9.**

**In Acts 26, Paul says that Yeshua told him of his plans for him at the time of the vision on the road to Damascus:**

**"It was on the road at midday, Your Majesty, that I saw a light much brighter than the sun, coming from the sky and shining around me and the men traveling with me. All of us fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me? You are hurting yourself by hitting back, like an ox kicking against its owner's stick." "Who are you, Lord?" I asked. And the Lord answered, "I am Yeshua, whom you persecute. But get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant. You are to tell others what you have seen of me today and what I will show you in the future. I will rescue you from the people of Israel and from the Gentiles to whom I will send you. You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God's chosen people." (Acts 26:13-18)**

**It is plain that in this account, Paul claims and tells us in his own words what he was told what to do by Jesus and also tells us that he was at that time informed of his role in taking what we think was Christianity to the Gentiles at the very time of his vision on the road to Damascus.**

**Answer for yourself:** But who was this "Jesus" that Paul encountered in light of us showing you that this conversion was in the year 27 C.E. and by all scholarly Christian accounts Jesus was not killed until around the year 30 C.E.? Could this have been the "Gnostic Christ Jesus" that Paul encountered "within"?

**Compare both of these items with the account that he is reported to have given in Acts 22. First, concerning his basic instructions:**

**As I was traveling and coming near Damascus, about midday a bright light from the sky flashed suddenly around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" I asked. "I am Yeshua of Nazareth, whom you persecute," he said to me. The men with me saw the light, but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, "What shall I do,**



Lord?" and the Lord said to me, "Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that God has determined for you to do. I was blind because of the bright light, and so my companions took me by the hand and led me into Damascus."

In that city was a man named **Ananias**, a religious man who obeyed our Law and was highly respected by all the Jews living there. He came to me, stood by me and said, "Brother Saul, see again!" At that very moment I saw again and looked at him. He said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see his righteous Servant, and to hear him speaking with his own voice. For you will be a witness for him to tell everyone what you have seen and heard." (Acts 22:6-15)

**Answer for yourself:** What is missing...did you notice?

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that the commission and instructions from Yeshua to go to the Gentiles is lacking in Acts 22?

**Answer for yourself:** Who told Paul of the details of his commission; Ananias or Yeshua?

*Here in Acts 22, Paul claims that his instructions were given to him by Ananias sometime after entering the city of Damascus, not directly by Yeshua on the road to Damascus as he claimed in Acts 26.*

The information about Paul going to the Gentiles comes even later in this version:

I went back to Jerusalem, and while I was praying in the Temple, I had a vision, In which I saw the Lord, as he said to me, "Hurry and leave Jerusalem quickly, because the people here will not accept your witness about me." "Lord," I answered, "they know very well that I went to the synagogues and arrested and beat those who believe in you. And when your witness Stephen was put to death, I myself was there, approving of his murder and taking care of the cloaks of his murderers." "Go," the Lord said to me, "FOR I WILL SEND YOU FAR AWAY TO THE GENTILES." - (Acts 22:17-21)

## JUST SO WE UNDERSTAND

*At one point (Acts 26), Paul claims that he is told of his mission to the Gentiles at the time of his vision. Yet, at another time (Acts 22), he states that after the vision he went to Damascus and then returned to Jerusalem, and only then did he receive these instructions.*

**Answer for yourself:** What am I to believe Paul? Can we not get the story correct?

**Answer for yourself:** Where is the Holy Spirit at work in this contradiction?

**Answer for yourself:** Are there other places in the New Testament where such contradiction and the absence of the direction of the Holy Spirit can be found? Sadly yes, in fact they abound!

Many will take issue with me of being too "picky" but let me remind you that millions of Christian believers treat the New Testament document as if it is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. It is not. Only by showing you the many problems contained within the New Testament which goes unrecognized by careless reading will you be able to see the deception at work by the Gentile redactors which literally changed a Jewish faith into a Gentile replacement faith as it exists today and distorted and completely changed a Jewish faith which once went into all the world into a pagan compromise as it exists today. It is time to repent and return to the faith once given to the saints. It is time to repent and return to the only Bible Yeshua ever used: the Hebrew Old Testament.

**Dear reader, there is no way to justify what I have just shown you. This is a direct contradiction of the previous information.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are we to believe the Holy Spirit can't get his story straight?

## **LOOKING EVEN DEEPER**

To add to the disparity of these conflicting statements, Paul's letter to the Galatians shows that It served Paul's purposes at that time to claim that after his vision, he did not return directly to Jerusalem from Damascus (as he claimed in Acts 22), but that instead he waited for three full years.

***Again this is a direct contradiction from the mouth of Paul himself to what has been said before by Paul.***

It is things like this that made me begin to study the New Testament line upon line and precept upon precept because if the document is from God then such errors would not be prevalent. I wish I could say that this simple example is the extent of the mistakes within the New Testament, but much more serious errors abundantly abound in the New Testament concerning precious doctrines which have been corrupted when viewed in their original context within the Jewish Old Testament. Let us continue.

But God in his grace chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him. And when he decided to reveal his Son to me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the Gentiles, I DID NOT GO TO JERUSALEM to see those who were apostles before me. Instead, I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus. IT WAS THREE YEARS LATER THAT I WENT TO JERUSALEM to obtain Information from Peter, and I stayed with him for two weeks. (Galatians 1:1-18).

Here, Paul attempts to stress that his instructions came from God and not from any of the other apostles (Ananias). For this purpose, it is convenient for him to contradict the claims that he previously made in Acts 22 and to separate himself from Jerusalem. Paul is developing his independent authority apart from the Jerusalem church.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just possible that Paul is teaching a different "Jesus" or a different "Christ" from the one being taught in the Jerusalem church-synagogue? (<http://firstnewtestament.netfirms.com>).

You will understand this ploy by Paul as you read more about his split with the Jerusalem church and the truth behind [Paul being a Gnostic Christian](#).

**Answer for yourself:** Which of these conflicting accounts are we to believe, and where is infallibility and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in these accounts?

**Answer for yourself:** If we cannot trust Paul about his conversion account, how can we trust what he teaches that stems from such a jumbled account, especially in light of the fact that much of what he teaches contradicts Moses, the Prophets, and Yeshua himself?

**Answer for yourself:** Never seen such contradictions before?

Neither had I until I studied with those who knew more than myself and purchased books which showed such things to me. God did not drop this knowledge into my mind while I slept or went to church. It came only by intense study. The good news is that such knowledge is free.

Obviously, only one of these claims can be true (which, of course, means that one of them is false). It is interesting that at this point in his letter to the Galatians, Paul swears in the name of the Lord that



**what he has just said is true:**

***What I write Is true. God knows that I am not lying! (Galatians 1:20)***

**Answer for yourself:** Why would Paul have to defend himself to others that what he is saying is not a lie?

Now you know. In the New Testament which contains contradictory statements attributed to Paul we find that such characterizations of Paul make him talk out of the side of his mouth just like a politician. If you want I can show you have Paul contradicts himself in Romans repeatedly (he also contradicts Yeshua and Moses often). Either Paul is schizophrenic or somebody is forging some of Paul's writings.

**Answer for yourself:** Could this be possible?

Casual Bible reading and attending Sunday sermons won't give you the understanding you need to see such things. **Study is the highest form of worship.** Let us worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. Such study reveals the weaknesses within the New Testament and reveals that a true Christian will keep and observe Biblical Judaism and not the paganized manifestation of it as we have today called "Contemporary Christianity".

***Now please don't get mad at me for showing you this, but let there be no doubt that I just showed you that the writers of the New Testament are in places lying about Paul!***

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that these "conversion" accounts later written in Paul's name were known to be false by those followers of Paul that yet existed generations later who knew that Paul taught a "different Christ" from the "historical Christ" of Rome's making in the early second through later centuries? Is this why Paul was made to say that his conversion to the "historical Jesus" was not a lie when study reveals that Paul was a pure Gnostic and never taught a human Jesus Christ?

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you find it rather strange that Paul had to guarantee he is not lying since the motive for writing such a statement in the first place is most likely the skepticism of his audience to the veracity of what he is saying or what is being said about him by those who in that day knew better?

Thus, in both the accounts of the witnesses and those of Paul himself, there are some very basic contradictions in the descriptions of Paul's supposed conversion. **While this does not prove that Paul's claim is false, it does provide one more link in the chain of reasoning presented through the articles of this ministry as we try to show you that the religious picture of the first century has been altered and in so doing we have a muddled representation of both Jewish Messianism and Gnostic Christianity by the writers of the New Testament. On a simple stage we see that Law has been replaced with grace, Passover with Easter, Passover with Communion, Sabbath with Sunday, etc. But more importantly the Gnostic Christ has been replaced with Rome's Cosmic Godman and this at the same time has completely destroyed the truths surrounding the historical Jesus Messiah. Rome's religious synthesis has been overly successful for few see this deception today.**

It is only by showing the reader the inaccuracies in the writings of Paul can we persuade today's brain-washed church that his writings are anything but infallible and inerrant, and were never intended to replace the Torah as our Bible, the Bible of Israel. At the very least, it provides enough information to allow for the possibility that Paul's claimed conversion may not have been genuine as depicted and this should make you wary of what is taught in his name, especially when it goes against the accepted and established religious belief system of Biblical Judaism. Any contradiction of Moses and the Prophets is not of God. Shalom.



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## THE DATE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S CONVERSION....DARE WE LOOK CLOSE?

It is the universal assumption that Paul, the persecutor of the early Christians, was converted by a vision of the risen Jesus, who proved his historic nature and identity by appearing to Paul in person. So it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever compared the conversion accounts of Paul for yourself? Are you aware that the account of Paul's conversion in the Book of Acts, thought by many scholars to be a second century documents, contradicts Paul's personal account in his authentic Epistle to the Galatians?

The account, however, is entirely opposed to that which is given by Paul himself in his Epistle to the Galatians.

*Gal 1:15-16 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (KJV)*

He tells how the change occurred, which has been called his conversion.

**Answer for yourself:** How did it occur according to Paul?

It was by revelation of the Christ within, but not by an objective vision of a personal Jesus, who demonstrated in spirit world the reality and identity of an historic Jesus of Nazareth, who had lately lived on earth. Such a version as that is rigorously impossible, according to Paul's own words. His account of the matter is totally contradictory to the account in the book of Acts. He received his commission to preach the Christ, as he declares, *"when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me [notice Paul did not say "to me" but "within me"],"* and therefore not by an apparition of Jesus of Nazareth outside of him! His Christ within was not the core of later Christian belief, but the Christ of the Gnosis. He heard no voice external to himself, which could be converted into the audible voice of an historic Jesus; and nothing can be more instructive to begin with, than a comparative study of these two versions, for showing how the true religious beliefs of the Gnostic Paul and his assumed conversion has been manipulated, and the facts perverted, for the purpose of establishing or supporting an orthodox history. What he did hear when caught up in the spirit he tells us was unspeakable; words which it is not lawful for a man to utter! Paul never makes mention of a Jesus of Nazareth in his authentic writings. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth is unknown to Paul! His name never once appears in the Epistles; and the significance of the fact in favor of the present view can hardly be exaggerated.



The name of "Jesus of Nazareth" does not appear in the First New Testament and the Gospel of Marcion either and Marcion we remember just happens to be the strongest advocate of the Gnostic Paul that we could ever find since Marcion states that only Paul understood "the Christ" correctly. In combating this fact in their day the Christian Fathers, when cornered on this fact of the absence of "Jesus of Nazareth" from the earliest writings of Paul which made up most of the First New Testament, charged Marcion in removing the the name of Jesus of Nazareth from his particular Gospel--being so virulent a heretic! Yet here we find the early and authentic Paul in agreement with Marcion, the Gnostic rejecter of Jesus of Nazareth, and of historic Christianity. We also saw in an earlier article that Marcion's "Gospel" was the earliest Gospel foundation from which the later Gospel of Luke will be taken which teaches us that Marcion's Christ was the earliest Christ of the Christian Church. As if that was not enough let us never forget that Paul was the only apostle of the true Christ who was recognized by Marcion. Now, as Marcion had rejected the human nature of the Christ of Rome's making, and left the sect which ultimately became the church of historic Christianity. Having understood all of this as it has been so far presented than it is impossible that Marcion could have adopted or upheld the Epistles of Paul and a "Pauline literalized Christ" as it has come down to us in our current version of the Epistles. Hence, Irenaeus complains that Marcion dismembered the Epistles of Paul, and removed those passages from the prophetic writings which had been quoted to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord! That is, Marcion, the man who knew & recognized his fellow-Gnostic in Paul, but rejected the literalizations and the spurious doctrines which had been secretly inserted by these proto-Catholic founders, who were the forgers of Historic Christianity which we have inherited today. Further, with regard to the Marcionites, Irenaeus says the Marcionites allege that Paul alone, of all the Christian teachers, knew the truth; and that to him the Mystery was manifested by revelation. These Marcionites spoke as Gnostics of a Gnostic and that Gnostic was Paul.

Now let us hear the words of an early Church Father that is not cut from the current mold and who give us a more truthful picture of the events handed down to us by Rome. Clement Alexander asserts that Paul, before going to Rome, stated that he would bring to the Brethren not the true Gospel history, but the Gnosis, or Gnostic communication, the tradition of the hidden mysteries, as the fullness of the blessings of Christ, which Clement says were revealed by the Son of God, the "teacher who trains the Gnostic by mysteries," i.e., by revelations made in the state of trance. He was going there as a Gnostic, and therefore as the natural opponent of Historic Christianity.

Now let us examine more closely Paul's supposed conversion.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you put on your thinking hats yet? You may need one for the following example. The conversion of Paul, according to the Acts, is supposed to have occurred sometime after the year 30 A.D. at the earliest; and yet if we accept the data furnished by the book of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he must have been converted as early as the year 27 A.D. Paul states that after his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem for three years. Then after 14 more years he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This second visit can be dated by means of the famine, which is historic, and known to have occurred in the year 44, at which time relief was conveyed to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Paul. If we take 17 years from 44, the different statements go to show that Paul had been converted as early as the year 27. Thus, according to the dates and the data derived from the Acts, from Paul's epistle, and the historic fact of the famine, Paul was converted to Christianity in the year 27 of our era!

**Answer for yourself:** Now for the \$64,000 question: What was Paul supposedly converted to then if Jesus was not dead yet in the year 27 A.D./C.E.? Why did not Paul go up to Jerusalem and hold a conversation with Jesus personally since by all Christian scholarly accounts he is yet alive at this time? What does this whole deception teach us or should teach us? Well first of all that what we are reading in our New Testaments given to us by Rome might not be true and we have to dig out the truth from other sources available to us today.

This could not have been by a spiritual manifestation of the supposed personal Jesus to Paul, who

**was not then dead, and had not at that time been re-begotten as the Christ of the canonical history.** This is usually looked upon (by Renan, for example,) as such an absurdity that no credence can be allowed to the account in the Acts. **Such a supposed conversion by its own account is dubious if not an impossibility; whether you look at Galatians and the conversion account which evidently is forged as well or the book of Acts and its conversion account. This betrays the action of textual forgers trying to write into history and the texts grounds and support for their religious beliefs long after Paul is dead.** They are trying to destroy the Gnostic Paul and his real faith in the "Christ within" which the earliest Christians held sacred. We know this for certain today since archeology has come to sound clearly the truths of that era that Rome tried to destroy and burn out of existence as they purged the great libraries of the world to hide the truth of their treachery. **Study reveals Paul was a Gnostic and not an advocate in the Historical Jesus of Rome's invention.** You cannot date one event by another which never occurred, or, if it did occur, is not recorded by Paul, especially when his own account offers negative evidence of its non-occurrence. It is only using plain words justifiably to say that the creators of the Acts of the Apostles falsify whenever it is convenient, and tell the truth when they cannot help it!

**Answer for yourself:** Well if Paul supposedly did not want to visit a still-alive Jesus at the time of his supposed "conversion" then why would he not want to see those of who followed him; his apostles and disciples?

In Paul's own account of his conversion he continues: ***"Immediately, I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia."***

**Answer for yourself:** Dare we detect in Paul's mention and disdain for "flesh" more of his Gnostic thought? More than likely "yes".

It is recorded for us that **Paul did not seek to know anything about the personal Jesus of Nazareth, his life, his miracles, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; had no anxiety to hear anything whatever from living witnesses or relatives about the human nature of this Divine Being, who is supposed to have appeared to Paul in person; completely changed the current of his life, and transformed his character; no wish even to verify the historic or possible ground-work for the reality of his alleged vision of Jesus!**

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you find that amazingly strange?

## **THE THEOLOGICAL SPLIT BETWEEN MESSIANIC JUDAISM AND Gnostic CHRISTIANITY**

When reading the accounts of the New Testament we are told that when he did go up to Jerusalem, three years afterwards, and again in fourteen years, he positively learned nothing whatever from those who ought to have been able to teach him of the supposed historical Jesus and tell him all things on matters of vital importance (for *historic* Christianity), about which he should have been most desirous to know, but had no manifest desire of knowing. We are told in Galatians chapter 2 that Paul saw James, Peter, and John, who were the pillars of the church and persons of repute, but whatever they were it made no matter to him; they imparted nothing to him. He says these respectable persons, these pillars, who seemed to be somewhat, communicated nothing to him; **contrariwise, it was he who had a gospel of his own, which he had received from no man, to communicate to them...the good news of the "Christ within" which was now to be taken to the Gentiles.**

***Col 1:27 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)***



*Rom 11:13 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: (KJV)*

These accounts need to be understood correctly for they depict contrary to what you might have supposed up to now; no doubt that Paul had come to bring them the Gnosis which according to him he was commissioned by God to take to the heathen Gentiles of the known world. They privately gave him the hand of fellowship, and offered to acknowledge him if he would keep out of their way with his other gospel--go to the Gentiles and leave them alone. There was a compromise, and therefore something to compromise, though not on Paul's account; but the only point of genuine agreement between them was that they agreed to differ! On comparing notes, Paul found that the Jerusalem Synagogue were preaching quite another gospel, and another Jesus, another form of "God's Salvation" [remember "Jesus" in Latin is the same as the Hebrew "Joshua" and both words mean "Yahweh is Salvation"] in the coming of a longed and prayed for Jewish human Messiah. Besides the Jewish nation had the Torah and already knew the consequences of awakening to God within and the righteousness that would come from such a spiritual enlightenment. It was the Gentiles who needed the awareness of "Joshua" or "Joshua-Jesus" or "Jesus" or "God's salvation". This human Messiah was not for Paul as his "Christ" was not a human but a Divine manifestation of God which was to be awakened within men and women as they recieved the mystery of Christ and the Christ awoke within them.

*Eph 3:4 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (KJV)*

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that Paul, when speaking of another Joshua or Jesus (in Hebrew Joshua means "Yahweh is Salvation" and Jesus is Latin for "Yahweh is Salvation), has in mind a spiritual salvation as taught by the Gnostics and the Jerusalem Church another salvation from Yahweh in the person of a human Messiah? Most likely yes. Both were speaking and looking for "salvation" but one political-military and the other in the souls of men.

**Answer for yourself:** Again we have to ask: "Just what was Paul converted to"?

Paul did not derive his facts from history, nor his gospel from the Apostles; he was neither taught by man nor book. Paul derived his gospel from direct personal revelation of the Christ within. This is Gnosticism!!! In short, his Christ was not that Jesus of Nazareth whom he never mentions nor the one suspiciously absent for the First Gnostic New Testament of 140 C.E. Once you see this and understand Paul's "Christ" is not the one that the Jerusalem Church-Synagogue preached and not the "historical Jesus" of Rome's production and once you do a comprehensive study of the true origin of the New Testament and its canonization which includes manuscript evidences that reveal the changes, omissions, additions, inventions, etc., of our texts in the New Testament over the earliest centuries of the Gentile Roman Church then you will understand in light of the absence in the earliest First New Testament of the Gnostic Christians of the:

- genealogies of Jesus Christ
- the birth narratives of Jesus
- the infancy narratives of Jesus

and the later inclusions in 180 C.E. of:

forged Epistles in Paul's name (Pastoral Epistles for instance) which make Paul give an anti-Gnostic slant to his theology when his earlier authentic Epistles teach just the opposite

**Gospel forgeries in the names of the dignitaries of the Jerusalem Church-synagogue that have been used and created in order to further the transformation of the "Gnostic Christ" into the "historical Christ", which had been understood "allegorically" since time immemorial.**

**By such cunning and deception and literary falsity and forgery the "Gnostic Christ" of Egypt and Paul was turned into a "historical being" which was placed in a historical time line by Rome in their ultimate religious synthesis where they fused together in "one person":**

- **The Jewish Messiah**
- **The Gnostic Christ**

**Once you study and see these New Testament forgeries for yourself which are chronicled by numerous scholars of the past centuries as well as the present and factor in the harsh reality and fact from your own study which will reveal to you that any existing historical evidence for a historical Jesus Christ that exists today outside this one book, the New Testament, is of a highly dubious nature or a forgery as shown by scholars today. When all this is done the "thinking believer" can see very clearly that this "evidence" for a "historical Jesus Christ" as a "human being" was manufactured and often invented along with forgery of historical records like Josephus for example and Suetonius and Pliny, etc.. Once all these things are factored together such as Egyptian study, Comparative religious study and a through understanding of Sun Worship, Gnosticism, study of the apostate Essenes and the Inter-Testamental Literature, the forgery of the Hebrew Scriptures when translated into Greek by these Essenes, the authentic Pauline Epistles and the Gnostic Christ, Marcion and the collection of the First Gnostic New Testament, the later refutation of Marcion's New Testament by Rome and the later invention of much New Testament writings along with forgery of existing Epistles, then it is not hard to see the puzzle come together for the "thinking believer. What we have is the fabrication of the New Testament "Jesus Christ" where Rome has taken the allegories and myths of the Ancients since Egypt and turned these "allegories" and "symbols" into a "literal history" of a man who never existed and created his life around the "literalization" of the events of the allegories taught about the Pagan gods and goddesses. Let me close with this reminder that is of immeasurable importance. Don't discount these myths and allegories of the Ancients when understood "allegorically" and not "literally". On prior websites Bet Emet has shown the fallacy of the "literalization" of these myths but on our Egypt site I show the truth of these "myths" when understood "allegorically". In my opinion when one fully understands Egypt and Egyptian Religion CORRECTLY then there is not a truer expression of God on this planet! Sadly we have been taught to approach these "Pagan Myths" again "literally" but when they are seen "allegorically" and as "metaphors" that capture for all time "Divine and unspeakable truths" of the Creator then they shine in all their splendor and often are breathtaking in their simplicity and honest truth. Again these "myths" that capture "Divine Truth" must be understood as the Ancients who formed them understood them and in so doing we see God as never before; untainted by the fictional creation of mankind who molds God after their dreams of power and conquest. These Ancient myths capture the workings of the Divine and His laws that order the Cosmos and the Universe and reveal Him and His ways to all mankind. This "order" and "law" was captured in myth by the Ancients and the messenger to mankind of this Revelation was "the Christ within" and not "without". This is the sad truth kept from us today and no greater tragedy is that we never see this misrepresentation of "the Christ" in Rome's New Testament when reading the "literalized synthesis" of this "Jesus Christ".**





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## MARCION THE MAN

Marcion was born in c.85 (W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), P. 213) at Sinope (modern Sinop on the Black Sea) in Pontus. It will be said by Tertullian: "The most barbarous and melancholy thing about Pontus [dismal as the region is of itself] is that Marcion was born there." (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 1.1.4). Marcion was the son of a bishop (Cross & Livingstone, 870) and became a prosperous ship owner and merchant (Hendrik F. Stander, "Marcion," Everett Ferguson, ed. *Encyclopedia Of Early Christianity*, (New York: Garland, 1990), 568; Christie-Murray, David. *A History of Heresy*; (Oxford: OUP, 1990), p. 26, notes that he may even have been a bishop himself. Epiphanius (c.315-403) alleges that his father expelled him from his home church for seducing a consecrated virgin (Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* 43.1. Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, (London: *Banner of Truth*, 1978), 52.8) but this generally held to be a libel among modern scholars (J.F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction To The Early History Of Christian Doctrine*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), p. 81; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2, 1910, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 484: *"...this does not agree with his asceticism, and Irenaeus and Tertullian bring no charge of youthful incontinence against him."* He travelled to Rome in 135-140 and presented the church there with a gift of 200 000 sesterces (50 000 silver denarii (W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church*, (London: SCM, 1991), 55.10). It was here, while a member of the church, that he developed his theology, *incorporating the ideas of the Gnostic teacher Cerdo with whom he became acquainted*. On being rejected by the eldership of the church and having his money returned to him, he set about organising his followers into a separate community. Marcion's church was organised in a similar way to the Roman church, so much so that Cyril of Jerusalem found it necessary to warn believers lest they enter a Marcionite church by mistake (Catechetical Lectures 4:4)." Christie-Murray, 27: "They have been called the first dissenters." Marcion was finally excommunicated in 144 (Cross & Livingstone, p. 870). From Rome he began to spread his message far and wide (Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 215.14). Justin Martyr (c.100-165) wrote in the 150's that he was "teaching men to deny that God is the maker of all things in heaven and earth and that the Christ predicted by the prophets is His Son" (Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 58.15). Marcion died c.160, but the movement to which he gave his name continued into the third century (Cross & Livingstone, p. 870; Bethune-Baker, p. 84, claims that there were Marcionite churches still in the 7th century. *Encyclopedia Britannica Micropedia*, "Marcion," Vol. VI. (London: William Banton, 1974), p. 605, finds evidence of them, especially in Syrian culture, in the late 10th century. Benjamin Walker, *Gnosticism: Its History And Influence*,. (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1983), p. 146: argues that *the absorption into Manicheism occurred after the 8th century. By the fourth century most of the Marcionite churches had been absorbed into Manicheism, another pseudo-Gnostic movement influenced by the writings of Paul the Apostle*. (Cross & Livingstone, p. 864). Ephraem Syrus (c.306-373) "emphasised always the kinship between Marcionites and Manicheans in his day."



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## MARCION...THE GNOSTIC

**Answer for yourself:** Was Marcion really a "heretic" or is it just possible that he, in his first New Testament, expressed the more authentic ideas of "the Christ" which were held by the earliest Christians?

Well if you have made it this far into our website on Marcion and the First New Testament then by now you are having serious doubts if Marcion really was a "heretic" after all. More than likely by now having come to understand the continued falsification and forgery of the New Testament by proto-Catholics as well as later Catholic monks along with newly acquired knowledge of Gnosticism, mysticism, the Logos and the Sophia, and a new understanding of Paul as a Gnostic, then you are now in a position to judge for yourself if what we have been handed down throughout history from the Early Church Fathers branding Marcion as a "heretic" is really truthful or not.

**Answer for yourself:** What was Marcion's contribution to Christianity, especially to the New Testament Canon? Many scholars have been more truthful concerning Marcion than the Early Church Fathers whose writings are full of hatred for this man.

- Casper Rene Gregory called Marcion "in every way the most active and influential man, bearing the name of Christian, between Paul and Origen" (Casper Rene Gregory, Canon and Text of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 81).
- Walter Bauer found in Marcion himself, "the first systematic collector of Paul's literary remains" (Walter Bauer, in Appendix II of John Knox, Marcion and the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 172).
- John Knox (1942) suggested that Luke-Acts may have been written in the late second century to replace or counteract Marcion's Luke (Knox, Marcion, 114-139).
- Floyd Filson wrote, "Of all the events that hastened the formation of the New Testament canon, none was so influential as the action of Marcion. We need not go so far as to say that Marcion created the idea of a New Testament canon, but his influence was certainly great" (Floyd V. Filson, Which Books Belong in the Bible? (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), p. 113).

## DISCOVERING THE TRUTH CONCERNING MARION'S LIFE, HIS WORKS, AND HIS THEOLOGY

Marcion's place in the history of Christianity is still not very well known. Over the last two hundred years, there has been a growing number of studies that have managed to shed more light on Christianity's first two centuries. Significant breakthroughs have been achieved through means of manuscript discoveries and critical reassessments of some strong traditions. One such orthodox claim that has lost support among many researchers is the once dominant tradition that describes Catholicism as the oldest form of Christianity (Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity).

In the Twentieth Century, the emergence of some significant studies on Marcion has led a variety of Christian thinkers to describe Marcion as the initiator of some important customs and features now found in our modern Christian Faith. Here is a brief list of five things created by Marcion:



- The "faith only" movement (solafideism),
- The theory of dispensationalism,
- The concept of "New Testament Christianity,"
- The New Testament itself, as a distinct body of inspired writings,
- Sola Scriptura, the idea that all Christian teachings should be based solely on the Scriptures (The New Testament).

There are at least eight notable reactions to Marcion that indirectly may be attributed to his early work and mission. After he evangelized the Roman Empire in the Second Century, there began to surface several energetic responses to Marcion's work:

- The Orthodox began to expand his New Testament,
- Such ideas as Church Tradition, the Rule of Faith and Apostolic Succession were introduced in order to undermine Marcion's insistence on sola scriptura. These formulations helped crystallize the concept of Orthodoxy (or Catholicism).
- After Marcion commenced his evangelistic crusade, a significant portion of Christian literature became devoted to apologetics (or polemical defenses) of Orthodoxy (correct doctrines).
- Forgeries of Christian semi-scriptures mushroomed. Some of these pseudepigrapha (false writings) were composed to counteract some aspect of Marcion's theology.
- The Apostles' Creed is generally recognized as a forgery. Some scholars, such as Arthur C. McGiffert, recognize it as composed specially to temper Marcion's theism.
- Even the extra-Biblical and incomprehensible word "Trinity" may be seen as a useful device invented to help fend off Marcionite logic.
- The Inquisition was originally designed as a mechanism to deal with the dualistic Albigensians who had taken up some of Marcion's ideas.
- The Rosary, according to Catholic Tradition, was also originally designed as an instrument to aid in the battle against Albigensians.

Marcion was attempting to bring Christianity back to its real roots found in the teachings of the Ancients (Gnosticism that can be traced all the way back to Egypt). Christianity was departing from an "allegorical" understanding of Divine Concepts like "the Christ" and "the Logos" by straying toward a "literalistic" interpretation of prior Divine Myths that had for millennia held sacred truths. The result of such apostasy from prior Divine truths through "literalism" was the gross sin of idolatry connected with the worship of a man instead of the invisible God (Atum). According to Marcion, faith in "the Christ within" led to the real birth of the family of Christians. Traveling across the ancient world, Marcion spread his message of faith. His great success was due to a number of factors. His personal dynamism may have been important. The staying power of his influence was due in large part to the New Testament that he published. The logic of his thinking was persuasive. His ability to answer the problem of evil made him rise head and shoulders above all philosophers and metaphysicians. Don't underestimate the importance of the Gnostic understanding of the presence and origin of Evil in the Universe which we will see soon in other articles.

## THE GNOSTICS MARCION & THE GNOSTIC FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

According to Clement of Alexandria, Marcion preceded in time all the great Gnostic masters: "those that invented the heresies" (The Miscellanies, Book 7, ch. 17. 106f.). That educated scholar from Alexandria (Clement) represents Marcion as an "elder" predecessor to two early Gnostic teachers, Valentinus and Basilides. Another heresiarch, Simon Magus, who is often portrayed as the grand father of Gnosticism, also is described by Clement as succeeding Marcion. "This statement of Clement appears to make Marcion an old man while (Basilides and) Valentinus were still young, and to put Simon Magus posterior to them all in time"

(Robert Smith Wilson, *Marcion: A Study of a Second-Century Heretic*,. James Clarke & Co. Ltd. 1932. p. 56). Clement's chronological data is not being so readily dismissed today, and **Marcion's career is being dated to an earlier time than before** (*Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity - An Essay on the Development of Radical Paulinist Theology in the Second Century*,. R. Joseph Hoffmann, Scholars Press 1984).

Besides this historical evidence about his priority, Marcion's simple Dualism seems to be the logical antecedent or background for the complex arrangements found in Gnosticism. Indeed, Gnostics are often mistakenly described as Dualists. **More correctly, the Gnostic method is essentially an imaginative attempt to give a monotheistic explanation about the rise of evil. (Gnostics seem to be direct heirs of Jewish speculative theology where there was a keen interest in angelology and Logos theories. The Gnostic aethereal matrix was mobilized to counteract the growing influence of Marcion's Antithesis. The Orthodox were less disturbed over the Gnostics than they were over Marcion.) The Gnostics believed they had adequately explained how darkness and corruption could ultimately descend from a singular source of Divine Light.**

Between that Perfect Light and our imperfect world, there are (according to the Gnostics) a significant number of stations, events and beings that tend to absorb the attribution of evil away from the highest level of Divine Unity. **The various lists of intermediaries found in Gnostic literature identify a number of individuals that seem to be responsible for all the strife and confusion that is so evident in this lower realm. Thus the Highest Cause remains ineffable and unblemished.** In other words they don't blame the origin of evil on the Supreme Good God. The Rabbis did the same thing by adjusting the Tanakh in places to protect the being of God from connection of being the author of "evil". The Gnostic quest is to return to that great level of Divine Integrity.

Marcion's simple Dualism was not adopted wholesale by any Gnostic system (unless Cerdo was a real Gnostic). All Gnostic theories eventually envision a single source for everything. Sometimes this original point seems to be bipolar and sometimes it is bisected along sexual lines. Even this binary entity acts corporately for the birth or incipience of all else. Marcion separated the one into basically "two" sources; one good and one bad.

All Gnostic theologies seemingly spring forth as ideological children born from the ancient Mosaic idea about an inviolable monotheism. This form of theism sees everything (no matter what) as ultimately deriving from a single Creator. Working within this rigid model of monism, the Judaistic or Mosaic theoreticians could only think in a linear or vertical fashion, where our world lies on one end, while an independent Father of Light stands on the other.

The new Gnostic systems describe every single thing as somehow related, but, due to Marcion's contention, evil is removed as far as possible down the ladder. These semi-Marcionite schemes all attempt to place evil far, far away from the Supreme Being. They make evil seem hardly related to the Most High Entity. In their effort to rebut Marcion's recognition of an independent kingdom of evil, the Gnostics preferred to describe the evil world as an accident or as a disturbance caused by a lack of knowledge. Evil, to the Gnostic, was mostly described as a mixing with Matter which in turn was able to interfere with man's clearness or pureness of vision.

Whenever a sufficient distance is achieved away from the Ultimate Source for Light, then this detached condition seems almost fated to bring about a measure of darkness. By not being directly responsible for an unenlightened world, the Gnostic God of Light and Wisdom was superficially made to resemble Marcion's. However, the Gnostic's ingenious image of divine supremacy was described more in terms of philosophical majesty or profundity. Originally, Marcion's God was known always as the highest example of moral character and civility. The Gnostics were generally a scholarly community who tossed around their knowledge of ancient history and traditions. They gleaned much from their library of classics and they mixed legendary and scriptural matters freely. They had pride in mental eccentricity and they gloried in their metaphysical erudition. Their key to the future was their mind's ability to hold onto the secrets of life. Their crowning jewel was their apparent ability to solve Marcion's dilemma without having to abandon monotheism.

**Because of this view concerning the origin of "evil" the later Church Fathers loved to**



**describe Marcion as a Gnostic. The original distinction between Marcion's semi-Gnosticism and pure Gnosticism is easily discoverable when the matter of the Christian canon is carefully examined.**

Marcion was a man who determined all by the canon (sola scriptura). He did not rely on secret visitations or mysterious documents in order to validate his teaching. **He relied solely on the plain message of the earliest existing Gospel in his day which was a collection of oral traditions from "Q" and the seven authentic Epistles of Paul.**

Marcion's use of existing Pauline epistles and the "Q" gospel of his day brings him closer to the Scripture-oriented Christianity of the great Councils than it does to the myth-oriented Gnostics. **In this way Marcion is best thought and viewed as a "semi-Gnostic".** Marcion sponsored an open Christianity that met in churches. The Gnostic affinity or group identity was a secret bond that transcended the local "Christian" congregations. Marcion preached the Gospel to all, while the Gnostics gloried in their elite status by carefully guarding the deepest of their inspired secrets. Again, the similarity between Marcion and the Gnostics is only superficial. The similarity actually only involves a common vocabulary of a few key words. When the respective usage of these words is taken into consideration, a vast difference slowly emerges. Marcion had a practical and ethical interest. The Gnostic interest was philosophical and argumentative. A Gnostic group could be libertine in its practice, and still it could be recognized as fundamentally faithful to the principles of Gnosticism. Marcion's principles always required the highest degree of morality. Love, for the Gnostics, was generally only their conscious desire to return to the Highest Heaven, in company with their friends. Marcion recognized the Gnostic Christ's great mission as a journey of compassion to this lost world. Loving our enemies is the heart of this Gospel.

So now we better understand that in his explanation of the origin and existence of evil in this world Marcion taught that the god of the Old Testament was not the true God but rather that the true and higher God had been revealed only with Christ Jesus who had come from heaven. The very first verse in Marcion's Gospel of the Lord begins with:

***1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, 2. Jesus came down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was...***

**This is the descent of "the Christ", the Gnostic Savior come to bring mankind the "Gnosis" necessary for his salvation and delivery from a prison of flesh with the attendant revelation and realization of "the Christ" within. This is NOT the coming of a human being but a Spiritual being possessing no flesh. This is the Docetic Christ of Marcion.** Absent from the First New Testament of Marcion's day is the later added genealogies, birth narratives, infancy stories, etc. Of course realizing that the earliest Christians were Gnostics then this should not surprise you. It would be only after Rome and their "literalist" Christ is given "birth" will these writings be added to the Second New Testament by Irenaeus and others in 180 C.E.

Marcion wrote the Antitheses to show the differences between the god of the Old Testament (not a loving God nor a perfect God) and the true God (the true God of love). This theological view of Marcion concerning a division between a God of violence and a God of love (dualism) would be the reason that Marcion would be excommunicated from the Roman church in 144 C.E., but he succeeded in establishing churches of his own to rival the catholic Church for the next two centuries. **Marcion is often thought to have first established an explicit canon. Marcion's canon consisted of the Euangelion, or the Gospel of the Lord, and the Apostolikon, ten epistles of Paul, not including the pastorals.** There is debate over whether Marcion truncated Luke and Paul or whether later orthodox scribes may have expanded them in some cases. **We have shown in another article that Marcion had the earliest "gospel" and that the Gospel of Luke will later be fashioned from Marcion's earlier gospel.** Marcion receives derogatory references from contemporary apologist Justin Martyr and heresiologist Irenaeus of Lyons. **We can reconstruct Marcion's writings through the references in Tertullian's Adversus Marcionem and Epiphanius' Panarion.** Relatively little is known

about Marcion (160 C.E.) because heterodoxy (his brand of Christianity) was put down and his works were destroyed, or lost, or both. What is known of his life, writings and theology are found, or founded upon, the works of his enemies:

- [Justin Martyr \(110-165\)](#)
- [Irenaeus \(120-202\)](#),
- [Epiphanius \(ca. 315-403\)](#) and especially
- [Tertullian \(145-220\)](#)

We will look at each of these Church Fathers and their views on Marcion in separate articles.





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## INTRODUCING MARCION WHO GAVE US THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

Just a quick word is needed about Marcion and his First New Testament before we dig deeply into this website to get answers to these above questions. Understand that Marcion was a Gnostic and held that only Paul, of all the apostles, correctly understood Jesus and his message.

**Answer for yourself:** Again it is premature to get into this here but if Marcion was a Gnostic and hated Jews, Judaism, and the Old Testament, then does it stand to reason that since he only supported Paul as the authentic revealer of Jesus as "the Christ" then is it possible that Paul is a Gentile like the Ebionites recount and that Paul is also a Gnostic in spite of Rome's attempt to portray him as "anti-Gnostic" in their forged Pastoral Epistles to which they attached Paul's name? I will give you a hint; "yes." More on this later.

Marcion is the first Gentile Christian to publish a fixed collection of books which contained a story of the life of Jesus and the writings of Paul. Notice I said "Gentile" because Matthew, Yeshua's Jewish apostle, is recorded in the writings of Papias to have written the first "life of Christ" in Hebrew. This is lost to us today. Marcion was a native of Sinope (or modern-day Sinop, a seaport off the coast of the Black Sea in Turkey) and he lived approximately from 70 to 150 C.E. (according to the most recent reckoning by R.J.Hoffmann in his work entitled *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity*, SCP 1984). **Marcion's main claim to fame, as generally acknowledged by most historians, is that he produced the earliest known New Testament canon, which preceded the Catholic version. He also founded a great church which lasted well into the fifth century, and for a time posed the most serious competition to the Catholic church.**

At the end of July, 144 CE, a hearing took place before the clergy of the Christian congregations in Rome. Marcion, the son of the bishop of Sinope who had become a wealthy ship-owner, stood before the presbyters to expound his teachings in order to win others to his point of view. For some years he had been a member of one of the Roman churches, and had proved the sincerity of his faith by making relatively large contributions. No doubt he was a respected member of the Christian community. But what he now expounded to the presbyters was so different from views held by the "literalists" of Rome that were utterly shocked! Marcion was teaching a Gnostic understanding of God and "the Christ" that can be traced by to the earliest recorded history on this planet. We call it Gnosticism today. The hearing ended in a harsh rejection of Marcion's views; he was formally excommunicated by Rome and his largesse of money was returned. From this time forward Marcion went his own way, energetically propagating a Gnostic understanding of God and His "Christ" that quickly took root throughout large sections of the Roman Empire and by the end of the 2nd century had become a serious threat to the mainstream Roman Christian Church. What I am describing is a conflict between "allegorists" and "literalists." In each city of any importance the Marcionites set up their church to defy the "literalist" Christian one. Although in definite decline in the West from the middle of the 3rd to the 4th centuries due to the power of the Roman Empire, the Marcionite movement proved more durable in the East, where, after remarkably overcoming the 3rd-century Roman persecutions of the emperors Valerian and Diocletian, it continued to flourish until as late as the 10th century, especially in Syrian culture. Marcion wrote only a single work expressing his ideas concerning God and His "Christ", *Antitheses (Contradictions)*, in which he set forth his ideas. Since it has not been preserved, we must be content with deducing its contents from notices contained in

the writings of opponents -- particularly in Tertullian's 5 volumes written against Marcion - Adversus Marcionem. The main points of Marcion's teaching were the rejection of the Old Testament and a distinction between the Supreme God of goodness and an inferior God of justice, who was the Creator and God of the Jews. He regarded Christ as the messenger of the Supreme God. Of major concern in our studies on this website will be the focus on Marcion's collection of religious documents that comprised the First New Testament and their teachings concerning Jesus and "the Christ."

Marcion's place in the history of Christianity is still not very well known. Over the last two hundred years, there has been a growing number of studies that have managed to shed more light on Christianity's first two centuries. Significant breakthroughs have been achieved through means of manuscript discoveries and critical reassessments of some strong traditions. One such orthodox claim that has lost support among many researchers is the once dominant tradition that describes Catholicism as the oldest form of Christianity (Walter Bauer. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity). Amazingly serious study will reveal that some of the earliest Christians and followers of Jesus as the "Christ" (both Jewish and Gentile) were Gnostic and metaphysical in their religious beliefs. Marcion is a perfect case in point and we this should give us pause when we consider that it was this school of "allegorical interpretation of the Christ" that provided the world the First New Testament. Even more alarming is the fact that Marcion championed Paul as the supreme revealer of this "Christ" in light of the fact that today he is also championed by Western Christianity as a "Literalist." Said another way Marcion and Gnosticism interpreted "the Christ" in an allegorical sense rather than a "historical sense." This is especially true following the destruction of the Temple and the failure of the historical revelation of the Jewish Messiah and the lack of the fulfillment of expected Jewish messianic prophecies.

**Answer for yourself:** Was Marcion's understanding of "the Christ" unique or can this concept be traced back into recorded antiquity as far back as ancient Egypt? It sure can; in fact it is the earliest understanding of mankind concerning God and His "Christ/Logos" and the path toward God. Understand the ancients always interpreted and understood this path in an allegorical manner has had Marcion and not in the manner of the "literalists" of Rome.

The task before us is to examine Marcion's understanding of God and "the Christ" which prompted him to collect and fashion the First New Testament in the first place.

**Answer for yourself:** Was Marcion teaching a different understanding of "the Christ" or would Rome in their refutations of Marcion and the First New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Have we as Christians today failed to learn the ancient's truths concerning "the Christ" and fallen prey to Rome's literalism; in so doing have been led into idolatry and not know it?

Along with this of course follows the necessity to understand Rome's refutation of Marcion's understanding of God and "the Christ," and their need to alter, change, destroy, invent and corrupt Marcion's First New Testament which reflects the earliest Christian understandings of "the Christ" with their own later second century production of the Second New Testament fashioned by Irenaeus in 180 C.E. which destroys almost completely the earliest Christian beliefs about Jesus and "the Christ."

## TIME TO PONDER

Needless to say Marcion is a very interesting and important person in early Christianity. He has been stigmatized by Rome's heresy hunters to such an extent that few ever look seriously into this man and his accomplishments and few have ever spent the time to try to understand him and his understanding of God and "the Christ" correctly since being influenced by the earliest Church Fathers in their hatred and slander of him. In spite of this biased presentation of Marcion by the earliest Roman Christians he is all the more important since giving the world the first New Testament.



We will in the following articles on this website investigate what was contained in the from of "books" and "epistles" in Marcion's collection of writings that become the First New Testament. **Of major importance, and I hope you can realize this, is the fact that much of our existing New Testaments today was totally absent from Marcion's earliest New Testament. Our New Testaments today contain "added" materials and dogmas expressing theologies that were not in Marcion's First New Testament. That should make you sit and ponder and ask "Why?" and "Where did they come from" and "Who wrote them in Paul's and the other Apostles' names?"**

**Answer for yourself:** Are the religious dogmas as collected and represented by Marcion, the Gnostic, reflective of what Jesus the Jew actually believed?

**Answer for yourself:** Are these "added" religious dogmas as found in our current New Testaments, as a refutation of Marcion and his Gnostic understanding of "the Christ", a truthful representation of what Jesus really believed and taught as a Jew?

**That should make you ponder at depth if concepts expressed by both Marcion and his later attackers are "true."** This again is all the more important in light of our failure today to understand these original "allegorical" truths correctly as expressed in Marcion's First New Testament.

**Answer for yourself:** If it can be shown, and it can, that these original "allegorical" truths, expressing Divine concepts, have been taught incorrectly to us as if "literal" truths, then do we have the truth about Jesus and "the Christ" at all today?

**Answer for yourself:** Coupled with this problem in another; are our current religious dogmas and religious beliefs and teachings held by Christians today that come from the "added" religious dogmas which were added to the New Testament from Irenaeus (180 C.E.) and others who rejected Marcion's First New Testament and the Gnostic understanding of "the Christ" as handed down since Egypt only contributed to our inherited deceptions of God and His "Christ" and we not know it?"

Well..let us continue to study...shall we?



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# MARCION, THE MAN, AND HIS NEW TESTAMENT

Over my life, and especially since my graduation from Seminary in 1988, I have read countless books on the New Testament and its origin. To say that there is conflicting information concerning the information is an understatement. Simply said what we find is a tension between the traditions of the Catholic Church and the early Church Fathers which is offset by what the scholars and archeology have to say which contradict this "accepted orthodox" tradition. Somebody is not telling the truth. This might seem hopelessly confusing at first but it is not as difficult to arrive at "the truth" about the New Testament as it might seem if one possesses patience, diligence, and the ability to think. If you cover enough materials and dig deep enough then you will eventually see through all the biased conjecture of the early Fathers and the Church and see the truth of the New Testament for yourself.

Any study of the New Testament must begin with its origin and the reason why it was collected in the first place. Unfortunately the confusion begins right away as we shall quickly see because the most authentic original records and evidence of the earliest New Testament of Marcion has been systematically destroyed. All that remains are the voluminous vicious attacks on Marcion and his theology which he expressed in the earliest collection of the Pauline epistles and earliest gospel records in his First New Testament. If one does not possess adequate background information concerning Gnosticism and the correct interpretation of its religious tenants then one cannot judge correctly these early Church Fathers who write so angrily against Marcion and his First New Testament.

Many books can be read but unbiased and truthful ones are hard to find; but not impossible. Discerning the wheat from the chaff is not easy; especially in light of the incessant "church tradition" that we are fed since childhood. Let me at this time recommend a great book that tells it not only "like it is" but verifies and confirms what my critical and unbiased studies of the New Testament has uncovered through the many years of study. Every serious Christian who is interested in the study of his faith needs to read the History of the Christian Religion To The Year Two-Hundred by Charles B. Waite. That of course is not the only good book out there but one of many. I find Waite's findings regarding Marcion and the First New Testament fresh with insights which I had myself likewise deduced through my serious years of study. I am a firm believer that if you see these truths of which Waite and myself and others speak today then you will draw the same conclusions. I present these findings among the following information about Marcion the man and his theology. Let us pay close attention between what we have been taught by traditional Christian tradition and "orthodoxy" and what we find when we see what constituted the First New Testament and what was later added to refute doctrines taught within it by Rome and their Second New Testament.

## MARCION...THE MAN...C.E. 145.....BUT THERE ARE TWO PERSPECTIVES...WHICH IS TRUE?

Truth is often elusive. There is nothing like the strength of tradition; especially Church Tradition which coupled the strength of the mighty Roman empire with religion. I mention this to prepare you for what comes next. I present to you a traditional account of Marcion as taken from a typical on-line encyclopedia concerning Marcion. Let us examine the typical presentation of Marcion who lived over 1900 years ago and who gave the



world the First New Testament. Notice first that the mention that Marcion has been labeled as a "heretic" by later Roman Catholicism is usually enough to close one's ears or mind to what comes next or to even consider his religious beliefs to evaluate if they contain merit.

Again this website is devoted to an unbiased and critical evaluation of Marcion and his First New Testament to see if ironically his religious beliefs expressed in his First New Testament happened to be accurate to what the earliest Christians believed about Jesus than what was later given to us by Roman Christianity. Now let us read what comes next and as usual I would expect every reader to discount everything that is said since taking everything which is said (by conditioning) to be "literal." We will find out later that much of what Marcion believed and expressed in the First New Testament was "NOT" literal but allegorical. That will put a whole new spin on everything when we come to investigate just what Marcion believed. Now the traditional slander of Marcion.

## TRADITIONAL ACCOUNT OF MARCION AS CONDITIONED BY ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Marcion , c. 85–c. 160, early Christian bishop, founder of the Marcionites, one of the first great Christian heresies to rival Catholic Christianity. He was born in Sinope. He taught in Asia Minor, then went (c. 135) to Rome, where he perfected his theory. In 144 he was excommunicated from the church. He then formed a church of his own, which became widespread and powerful. Marcion taught that there were two gods, proclaiming that the stern, lawgiving, creator God of the Old Testament, and the good, merciful God of the New Testament. He considered the creator god the inferior of the two. Marcion also rejected the real incarnation of Christ, claiming that he was a manifestation of the Father. Though generally seen as one of the most important leaders of the somewhat loosely defined movement known as Gnosticism, he did not share some of the main premises of other Gnostic sects. He believed in salvation by faith rather than by gnosis; he rejected the Gnostic emanation theory; and he sought truth in his own truncated version of the New Testament, which included only 10 of the so-called Pauline Epistles and an edited version of St. Luke. He completely rejected the Old Testament. He explained in his Antitheses that since Jewish law was often opposed to St. Paul, all passages in the Bible that suggested the Jewish foundation of Christianity should be suppressed, even including such statements by St. Paul (see antinomianism). Marcionism emphasized asceticism and influenced the developments of Manichaeism, by which it was later absorbed. Though Its effect on orthodox Christianity was to cause a canonical New Testament to be assembled and promulgated and the fulfillment of the Old Law in the New Law to be clearly delineated.

Now after reading this one account of Marcion is a fairly accurate presentation of the Early Church Fathers like Tertullian's and Epiphanius' account and summary of Marcion then one is most likely to agree with them that Marcion is "Satan in the flesh." But hold on!!! Things may not be as they are purported to be if we look deeply into the problem of Marcion and the existence of the First New Testament which reflected his "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" and not the "literal" understanding of "the Christ" as later taught by Rome. Much of what we read today about Marcion is outright slander and misrepresentation and misunderstanding of not only what Marcion believed but what the earliest also believed about "the Christ."

## NOW AN UNBIASED ACCOUNT TAKEN FROM YEARS OF STUDY OF ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCES CONCERNING MARCION

Marcion was born at Sinope, in the second century. He came to Rome about the year 142.

Tertullian says, the fiercest and most barbarous nations lived upon the Euxine Sea--that nothing had the glow of life there--that all things were torpid and stiff with cold - that nevertheless, nothing in Pontus was so barbarous and sad, as that Marcion was born there. As you can see Tertullian had a great hatred for Marcion.

**Dr. Lardner, on the authority of Jerome and Augustine - credits Marcion with being a man of letters [Lardner's works, vol. 4, p.526.] He preached and disseminated his doctrines, for twenty years; and with such success, that in the time of Epiphanius, his followers were in every nation under heaven.**

The story that before he came to Rome, he had seduced a young woman, Dr. Lardner thinks an invention of Epiphanius.[Ibid. vol.4, p.59'. ] It probably originated in the fact which we learn from Jerome, that Marcion had sent before him to Rome, a woman, to prepare the minds of the people for his doctrines [ Jerome, adv. Ctesiph. t. 4, p.477. ].

**Marcion is said to have rejected the Old Testament entirely; not considering it of any authority after the coming of Christ.** He wrote a work entitled "Antithesis." in which he contrasted:

- **The old system with the new**
- **The God of the one, with the God of the other**
- **The law with the gospel.**

Marcion represented Christianity as a new system, abrogating the old, and as entirely disconnected from it. The Creator of the world described in the Old Testament, [The Demi-ourgos], was different from the God of the new dispensation, and inferior to him. **From the superior God, Jesus had come, endued with divine power, commencing with the beginning of his ministry.**

He maintained the doctrine of the impurity of matter (all matter was evil coming from an inferior God which created a world with suffering and evil within it) and could not therefore believe in the immaculate conception. According to Tertullian,[ Adv. Marcion, 3.8. See also de Pr. C. 33, 34.] he even denied the corporeal reality of the flesh of Christ. In other words "the Christ" was not a human being but a Cosmic principle among mankind.

Marcion denied the resurrection of the body, and believed in the doctrine of necessity. For Marcion the resurrection was a spiritual rebirth of one's soul/spirit whereby through Divine Revelation and self-awareness one came to the understanding of from where he had come, whom he really was, and where he was to return at death. In other words mankind is God within this matter of fleshly bodies. **Marcion was a follower of Paul, and accused the other apostles of having perverted the gospel doctrines.**

***Now we need to pay close attention.*** Tertullian as mentioned above was a staunch attacker of Marcion and the Gnosticism of Marcion. Tertullian ingeniously endeavors to treat this accusation of Marcion concerning the perversion of "gospel doctrines" as being aimed at the four gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Is the comment from Tertullian that Marcion perverted "gospel doctrines" referring to the existence of the four gospels in Marcion's day or to religious beliefs that will be expressed in these Four Gospels when written later? **This is a very important question that will determine either the early or late date for the existence of these four gospels.**

**Tertullian comment is understood by some that he is arguing that these four gospels must have been in existence before Marcion.**

**Answer for yourself:** But was this the real intent of Tertullian's remark?

His argument, however, destroys itself; since the apostles denounced were Peter, James, and John; only one of whom has credit for writing either of the four gospels, while to the other two were attributed two of the apocryphal gospels. **Marcion probably referred to the corruption of "the gospel," and not to any written books that were in existence in his day (140 C.E.).**

Marcion taught and permitted the baptizing by women. It may be inferred, also, from Epiphanius, that he did not treat with much respect those who refused them this privilege. [Adv. Har. 42.4.]



# MARCION'S NEW TESTAMENT...WHAT OF ITS RELIABILITY?

The first New Testament that ever appeared, was compiled and published by Marcion. It was in the Greek language. Marcion's First New Testament consisted of :

- "The Gospel," and
- "The Apostolicon."

In Marcion's First New Testament here was no Book of Acts and no Book of Revelation and it only consisted of one gospel.

The Apostolicon comprised ten of Paul's Epistles, as follows:

- Galatians, except all of Galatians chapter 3 except one verse
- 1st and 2d Corinthians,
- Romans, except the 9th-11th, and 15th and 16th chapters,
- 1st and 2d Thessalonians,
- Ephesians,
- Colossians,
- Philemon,
- Philippians
- Laodiceans (part);

arranged in the order as here named.[ Also part of the Epistle to the Laodiceans.]. This canon of the New Testament was prepared and published soon after his arrival at Rome ; probably about A. D. 145. Baring-Gould thinks he brought the gospel with him from Sinope. [Lost and Hostile Gospels, p.241 ].

Tertullian accuses Marcion of giving no name or title to his gospel. It was called simply "the Gospel;" and sometimes, "the Gospel of the Lord." Marcion claimed for his "Gospel" the authority of Paul himself. It closely resembles what will later become the Gospel of Luke, but Marcion's gospel is much shorter.

Ever since the time of Tertullian, it has been, by many, charged against Marcion, that he corrupted the Gospel of Luke. This charge, it will be seen as we proceed, cannot be sustained. Nearly all we have concerning the Gospel of Marcion, comes through Tertullian and Epiphanius, both of whom were violently opposed to him, and neither of whom was particularly scrupulous in the means employed against an adversary. Hence it has become difficult to reproduce the gospel. Several German critics have attempted to reconstruct it, and it is published in the Codex Apocryphus of Thilo, from the works of Hahn.

In Marcion 's Gospel, there was nothing corresponding to the first three chapters of Luke. They are simply not there. Absent from Marcion's First New Testament and gospel are:

- The introduction of Luke found in verses chapter 1 verses 1-4
  - The birth of John the Baptist is foretold in verses 5-25
  - The angelic announcement to Mary that she shall conceive a son named Jesus in verses 26-38
  - Mary's visit to Elizabeth to announce her pregnancy in verses 39-45
  - The Magnificat praising God for her impregnation in verses 46-56
  - The birth of John the Baptist in verses 57-66
  - Zachariah's prophecy in verses 67-80
- The birth of Jesus in chapter 2 verses 1-7
  - The shepherds and the angels who attend the birth of Jesus in verses 8-20

**The presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple in verses 21-24**

- **Simeon and Anna give praise for the baby Christ in verses 25-40**
- **The boy Jesus in the temple in verses 41-52**
- **The preaching of John the Baptist in chapter 3 verses 1-20**
  - **John's physical baptism of Jesus in verses 21-22**
  - **The genealogy of Jesus in verses 23-38**

**Answer for yourself:** What is the overriding common theme in the above passages? They involve the literal birth of the baby Christ as Jesus to human parents. We are led to believe in reading these that "the Christ" assumed literal flesh as man when archeology today has revealed the earliest Christians were Gnostics which understood "the Christ" as a spiritual concept and not a "fleshly concept."

**Answer for yourself:** What possible reason could there be for these passages not being present in Marcion's First New Testament? Simply the earliest Christians were Gnostics which did not hold to a "literal" fleshly and human Christ embodied in only one person; they understood as Paul would write: *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" Col 1:27 27 (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Since the collection of the First New Testament was a collection of religious documents presenting Gnosticism and "the Christ" then is it remotely possible that these above sections may have not existed in 140 C.E.?

**Answer for yourself:** Do you recall Marcion was a Gnostic and understood the concept of "the Christ" to be a non-human manifestation of "the Logos" among mankind and an intermediary between Pure Spirit and the soul of mankind? This "Christ" did not possess flesh; He came to tabernacle within all flesh.

**Answer for yourself:** Could these passages which refer to a human and fleshly manifestation of "the Christ" as a man named Jesus have been added later in order to give this "allegorical Christ" a "literal" interpretation of flesh and bones and position him in a historical timeline?

**The first chapter of Marcion was similar to the fourth of Luke, but had many variations from it;** and it is here that the critics have had the most difficulty. After passing the first chapter of Marcion and fourth of Luke, the progress is somewhat easier.

**Tertullian makes a vicious and unfounded charge against Marcion that has influenced all of Christianity since; a most serious charge if truthful. Tertullian charges Marcion with corrupting the already existing New Testament that Rome would later promote.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is this charge of Tertullian founded upon truth; did Marcion really corrupt, pick and choose, and delete theology from an already existing collection of gospels and Pauline epistles or it is Tertullian's charge a pack of lies based on hatred and totally unfounded?

**Answer for yourself:** Was the New Testament as later envisioned by Rome (their later Second New Testament that will differ considerably from Marcion's First New Testament) in existence at this early date or was Marcion's collection of New Testament writings the only writings that existed in his day and presented in their entirety?

Tertullian furnishes but little aid; but Epiphanius, writing in the same language with Marcion, gives a list of 78 passages, in which, as he claims, Marcion corrupted the text of Luke. As he mentions the most trivial deviations, giving the exact words in every instance, we think it may be taken as the correct text of Marcion. This opinion is confirmed by the fact, that in his scholia, he recapitulates every reading in almost precisely the same words; the deviations being few and unimportant.

Tertullian, in his work against Marcion, has a running commentary on Luke, with a constant invective against



**Marcion, and an occasional allusion to his gospel. From this some little further assistance may be obtained. Too much reliance has been placed upon Tertullian's criticism of Marcion by critics, as it is quite uncertain, in many cases, whether Tertullian is referring to the Gospel of Marcion, or to the text of Luke, as it prevailed in his day. By comparing all that is said by these two writers, Tetrullian and Epiphanius, the text of Marcion may be pretty nearly discovered.**

**As we progress in our studies on this website we will look at these differences and the theological reasons for them in the variances of Marcion's First New Testament and Irenaeus' and Rome's Second New Testament. Blessings..Craig Lyons M.Div.**



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## MARCION AND HIS THEOLOGY AND ITS LEGACY

The lone written work of Marcion was **Antitheses**. This non-existing work today was cited by Tertullian in **Against Marcion**. Again this only testifies to Rome's extensive destruction of the literature of their theological opponents. Marcion's Antitheses sought to demonstrate the contradictions between the Hebrew Bible and Christian writings and the conflict between their two different Gods (one of love in the New Testament and one of destruction and violence in the Old Testament). Tertullian wrote, "These are Marcion's Antitheses, or contradictory propositions, which aim at committing the gospel to a variance with the law, in order that from the diversity of the two documents which contain them, they may contend for a diversity of gods also" (Tertullian, **AM 1.19**, in **ANF**, vol. 3, p. 285). There is little doubt that the teachings of Marcion and his followers represented a greater threat to Orthodox Christianity than any other heresy in the second century. (G.R.Evans, A.E. McGrath, & A.D. Galloway, **The Science of Theology**. (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986) p. 43; Henry Chadwick, **The Early Church**. (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 39). Although none of his own writings are extant it is possible to piece together a picture of the man and his message from the writings of his opponents (F.L. Cross, & Livingstone, eds. "Marcion," **The Oxford Dictionary Of The Christian Church** (Oxford: OUP, 1990) p. 870; Christie-Murray, David. **A History of Heresy** (Oxford: OUP, 1990), p. 27). Especially helpful is the writings left to us by Tertullian (c.160 - c.225 AD), though this must be done carefully, realizing that they were far from unbiased.

In addition to writing **Antitheses**, Marcion also may have written, or influenced the writing of, what is called **The Marcionite Prologues to the Letters of Paul**. Marcion's First New Testament contained the oldest known collection of the epistles of Paul, which he called an "Apostolikon." The Marcionite "prologues" to those epistles are still preserved in most manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate where they had been translated from Greek originals. Marcion's authorship of these "prologues" is questioned by some but not all scholars today. And of course, Marcion's most important written contribution was his arrangement and redaction of his own closed canon of the First New Testament.

Marcion's theology was very similar to Gnostic theology in many ways. But as stated earlier it differs as well in many ways. Marcion is best described as a "semi-Gnostic". But he differed with mainline Gnosticism in several important ways as well. According to Knox, "Marcion was not primarily a Gnostic but a Paulinist (John Knox, **Marcion**, p. 14).

Knox represented common thinking when he summarized Marcion's theology as follows:

- **The Creator of the world, although a real God, must be distinguished from the higher god, unknown except as he was revealed in Christ;**
- **The Creator of the world is a just God, but severe and harsh; the God whom Christ revealed is a Father, a God of love;**
- **judgment is the prerogative of the Creator; redemption is the free gift of the God of love;**
- **the Jewish Scriptures represent a true revelation of the Creator, but they do not speak of or for**



**the God whom alone Christians ought to worship and from whom alone salvation from the present wicked world is to be received;**

- **the revelation in Christ was intended not merely to supplement or 'fulfil' Judaism but entirely to displace it--the one had no connection with the other;**
- **the Son of the Father did not actually take sinful flesh but only appeared to do so;**
- **there is no resurrection of the flesh; and**
- **Paul was the only true apostle, to whom Christ committed his gospel-- other 'apostles' were false and had misled the church. (Knox, Marcion, 7).**



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# THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT BY MARCION - A CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

Having grown up in Church all of my life, and having a fairly heavy exposure to Mainstream Christianity, and having familiarity with the Bible, possibly you like I noticed that Mainstream Christianity often de-emphasizes the Old Testament and puts a disproportionate amount of emphasis on Paul's epistles. I would hesitate to say that any part of the Scriptures can be overemphasized. However, if we give uncalled-for weight and emphasis on certain parts of the Bible (like the New Testament), and neglect what the rest of the Scriptures teaches about an issue (especially the Old Testament), we will probably develop an unbalanced view of that particular issue which will lead to a misunderstanding of the issue at hand. Thus our obedience and conduct will be incorrect and possibly sinful because we only looked at a small part of Yahweh's revelation in the Bible. What is most troubling is that often parts of the New Testament which contradict the teachings of Moses and the Prophets are emphasized over the Old Testament .....the only Bible Yeshua knew!

By volume, Paul's epistles make up approximately 5% of the Bible. Paul's writings are considered holy Scripture by Mainstream Christianity, but neither Paul nor the Holy Spirit expected us to give more weight and authority to these epistles than we do to the Old Testament or to the rest of the New Testament, for after all, in Acts 28:23 it is recorded that the Apostle Paul taught "Jesus" as being the Messiah from out of the Law of Moses and the Prophets in the Old Testament.

**Answer for yourself:** Do you not find it interesting that over 35 years since the cross of Christ we find the Apostle Paul teaching out of the Old Testament and not using his personal letters as Scripture?

By putting a disproportionate amount of emphasis on these letters (only 5 % of the whole Bible) that Paul sent to various churches, we fail to follow the example of Paul, who told the Ephesians, "I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL the counsel of God" (Ac.20:27). By neglecting certain parts of the Bible (95% of which lies outside the Pauline epistles), we ignore Paul's declaration that "all Scripture is inspired and is useful" (2 Tim.3:16). Dear believer when Paul uttered this often quoted saying that "all Scripture is inspired and is useful for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction" the bulk of his writings had not even been written yet, and without a doubt, he was referring to the Bible used by Jesus which is the Old Testament which is tragically so overlooked in the churches that bear his name today. In fact the vast majority of churches that bear his name teach just the opposite of what Jesus taught in that they teach the Law (Torah=instruction) has passed away and has been replaced by "grace."

Christianity's strong emphasis on Paul's writings, and lack of emphasis on so much of the rest of the Bible, is puzzling, no only to me but to the many who study the Scriptures in detail. It is especially puzzling when we consider Peter's warning about Paul's writings: "His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet.3:16).



**Answer for yourself:** Now don't you think it ironic and puzzling that Christianity today primarily focuses on that 5% of the Bible that even the Apostles who lived with Jesus and headed up his Church found unsettling, difficult to understand, and easily misunderstood?

**Answer for yourself:** Possibly have we, with all our good intentions, also been misled by what we hear today from those who themselves have misunderstood the often contradictory passages in our Bibles written by Paul? Let me give you one for instance:

## LET US LOOK AT JUST ONE OF THE PAULINE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Paul states in Romans 2:13 that: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Then we see that Paul states in Romans 3:20 that: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

There you have it. Paul states in Romans 2:13 we are justified by deeds of the Law then he contradicts himself in Romans 3:20 by saying that none will be justified by the deeds of the law.

**Answer for yourself:** Which are we to believe? Are you confused? Is Paul confused? What are we to believe?

**Answer for yourself:** Is faith without confirming obedience enough for eternal life?

If it was NOT easy for Paul's contemporaries to understand his epistles, we can be sure that it will be even HARDER FOR US to do so, with our limited knowledge of the times, situations and problems Paul was addressing when he wrote to these various churches. Yet some Christians, perhaps unknowingly, are more intent on following the easy-to-misunderstand teachings contained in Paul's letters than they are on following the plain teachings of the Messiah Jesus contained in the Gospels.

## HOW DID 5% OF THE BIBLE (PAUL'S LETTERS) BECOME SO IMPORTANT TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT? ....MARCION GIVES US OUR FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

**Answer for yourself:** Who is responsible for putting together such conflicting writings and passing them off as an authority for faith and practice, let alone a replacement for the Old Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** How did this shift of focus come about?

**Answer for yourself:** What caused the Church to begin paying so much attention to Paul and so little attention to the Law and the Prophets and other parts of the Bible which to Jesus was his whole Bible?

To discover the answer to this question, we must go all the way back to the Second Century. After all the original Apostles had died, other people took on the responsibility of continuing the Church's work. The original Apostles were all Jews, who had been exposed to the teachings of the Law and the Prophets since their childhood. The leaders who replaced the Law and the Prophets with the Pauline epistles were mostly Gentiles from pagan backgrounds, who had comparatively little understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures (who previously were Gentiles in the flesh...being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world). We can read about these people in various documents from the Second Century.

One Church historian has this to say about these documents: "Many stories come in versions so distorted that it

is hard to decide whether the principal characters were worthy successors to the apostles, or the devil's own agents. Perhaps their contemporaries were as uncertain as we are." (Smith, M. A. From Christ to Constantine, London: Intervarsity Press, 1971, p.14).

There is one character, however, which was undoubtedly one of the greatest adversaries to maintaining the faith once given to the saints.... the heretic Marcion. Marcion lived in the second half of the Second Century and it was he who was the first to collect and alter the writings in existent at that time from the followers of Yeshua. Marcion taught that the entire Old Testament should be rejected because it belonged to an evil, inferior God, and not to the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth. With such an attitude it is easy to understand why his "First New Testament" was an aberration of truth which in reality was founded upon anti-Semitism.

Marcion was very anti-Jewish; therefore he also rejected any New Testament writings which appeared to speak favorably of "Jewish practices" (i.e., keeping the laws and commandments of the Old Testament, keeping the Festivals and Holy Days of the LORD, keeping the Sabbath, etc.). As one writer notes, "Marcion started the trend which has had many followers right up to the present -- if it doesn't suit the theory excise it as spurious or an interpolation." (Smith, M. A. From Christ to Constantine, London: Intervarsity Press, 1971, p.53).

## THE MAKING OF THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

By the time Marcion finished editing the existing writings from the Yeshua's followers, Marcion's "Bible", or should I say New Testament, consisted of nothing more than Luke's Gospel (minus the "Jewish" elements...including the infancy narratives) and ten of Paul's epistles (many of which were added to and altered by the Monks until the completion of the Canon). That is all that was there. What is important for you to realize is that Marcion's "skeleton" would be adopted, added to, and deletions made by Irenaeus in 180 C.E. Now we have the New Testament which will become the foundation for the Catholic Church in years to come.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that the infancy narratives, especially Luke chapter 1-3 were not in there?

**Answer for yourself:** Were you also aware that Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11 were not in Marcion's First New Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** Do you realize that for one who was opposed to Law and partial to grace, and who would have loved to use for his polemic against the Jews such a passage as Romans 10:9-10 (9. That if you shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.) could not because it was not written yet nor was it available to be included in his canon?

**Answer for yourself:** As a Christian don't you find that more than problematic considering it did not exist in 140 C.E. but was added by others before 180 C.E. when we now find it in the Romans collected by Irenaeus?

Paul, Marcion taught, was the only apostle who could be trusted. In reality I found it to be just the opposite after 15 years of in-depth Biblical research.

Marcion's anti-Jewish, pro-Paul churches spread throughout the Roman Empire and soon became a major threat to the Messianic faith. According to historians, Marcion's heresy continued to spread until it finally died out sometime around the Fifth Century.

**Answer for yourself:** We who claim to believe the Bible must ask ourselves an important question: Did Marcion's anti-Jewish, anti-Old Testament, pro-Paul heresy really die out?



**Answer for yourself:** Or did the Church simply succumb to it and accommodate it and incorporate it, in a subdued form, into Mainstream Christianity?

## MARCION'S INFLUENCE TODAY IN CHRISTIANITY THROUGH HIS COLLECTION OF WRITINGS ...THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

**Answer for yourself:** Of course our Bible, unlike Marcion's, includes the Law and the Prophets, but how much do we heed their instruction?

**Answer for yourself:** When was the last time your church preached out of the Old Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** How many classes in your church's educational program is devoted to the Old Testament?

**Answer for yourself:** When you read the Bible for yourself do you find that you read the New Testament more than the Old Testament?

When we examine the average Christian's attitude to the Law and the Prophets, it is obvious that the influence of Marcion is very much alive in the church today and actually determines what is being taught and what is not being taught.

Although the Church pays lip service to the inspiration and authority of all the Scriptures, the Church's de-emphasis of the Law, the Prophets, and anything "Jewish," and its heavy emphasis on Paul to the exclusion of other sections of the Bible, reveals that the Christian Church today is basically Marcionite in practice and that the influence of Marcion is alive in the churches of today. For those who doubt this assertion, let us examine some things that Marcion taught, and we will see that the influence of Marcion still has a very strong influence on the Church today.

## MARCION'S THEOLOGY IS TO BE FOUND IN THE WRITINGS HE PUT TOGETHER AND ALTERED...THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

Marcion's most influential writing was a work entitled Antithesis, described as "a highly competent work" which consisted of "contrasted statements arranged to prove the incompatibility of the law and the gospel." (Tertullian, Against Marcion, trans. and ed. Ernest Evans, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, p.xv). Please notice that other Gentile church fathers even were aware of Marcion's intent to contrast Law vs. Gospel, or more appropriately understood, contrast the Old Testament vs. the New Testament. Sadly this idea is prevalent in most churches today.

Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), there are no known copies of Antithesis in existence. What we know about Marcion's teachings comes mainly from the writings of those who opposed his heresy. The one to write the most about Marcion was Tertullian, a church leader who wrote a lengthy work called Against Marcion. Tertullian describes Antithesis as "a work strained into making such a division between the Law and the Gospel as thereby to make two separate gods, opposite to each other, one belonging to one instrument (or, as it is more usual to say, testament), one to the other, and thus lends its patronage to faith in another gospel, that according to Antithesis." (Tertullian, IV.1)

No real Christian today would admit to believing in two gods, of course. Yet many believers make such a division between Old Testament Law and New Testament grace; they view the Law as something opposed to grace (its not). Because of the influence of Marcion the Law is seen as something obsolete and of little use to a Christian today. Such a warped view of God's Law will carry over into our view of God Himself. If God's Old Testament Law is opposed to God's New Testament grace, we end up with either a schizophrenic God, or Marcion's two gods.

"Marcion sets up unequal gods," Tertullian writes, "the one a judge, fierce and warlike, the other mild and peaceable, solely kind and supremely good." (Tertullian, IV.1.6)

**Answer for yourself:** Is this not exactly what many Christians do?

**They shun the "Old Testament God" because He is too stern and fierce. They focus instead upon the "New Testament God," who, in their minds, does not expect obedience to His laws.** Listen to Tertullian's description of Marcion's God, and see if it is not a description of the god presented by the Church today: Marcion's god "displays neither hostility nor wrath." He "neither condemns nor disdains" and "does not punish." "A better god has been discovered," Tertullian sarcastically writes, "one who is neither offended nor angry nor inflicts punishment...he is merely kind. Of course he forbids you to sin -- but only in writing. It lies with you whether you consent to accord him obedience." (Tertullian, IV.1.26f).

"To what purpose does he lay down commands?" Tertullian asks. "This god is exceptionally dull-witted if he is not offended by the doing of that which he dislikes to see being done." (Tertullian, IV.1.26f).

We should ask ourselves the same question about the God we worship.

**Answer for yourself:** To what purpose does God lay down commands which He never expected to be obeyed by his people?

We are certainly not justified by keeping the Law without faith. We are justified by faith first.

**Answer for yourself:** But after we are justified, what are we to do with God's commandments? Are we to put them into practice, or are we to ignore or disobey them?

One thing that has helped the influence of Marcion to thrive so well in the Twentieth Century Church is the popularity of the Scofield Reference Bible. Even Christians who have never seen a Scofield Bible have probably been affected by it indirectly, through preachers and teachers who have been influenced by it. The Scofield Bible contains many excellent study notes and aids to understanding the Scriptures. Several of Scofield's notes, however, strongly suggest a Marcionite view of Law and Grace. A reader of Scofield's notes is left with the impression that Law and Grace are mutually exclusive and are opposite forces that continually oppose each other. Scofield's anti-law bias has fed and nurtured and sustained the tares of nomophobia (fear of the law) that Marcion sowed in the Church nineteen centuries ago. As the end of the age approaches, God is sending forth His messengers to uproot these tares, so His wheat can mature and bring forth the fruit of obedience to God's laws.

Sadly a spirit of lawlessness (rejection of Law with a replacement of grace only) has been hanging over the Church for most of its history. Some Christians have been influenced by it more than others, of course. It may be hard for you to understand this, but Paul saw this same insidious thing beginning in his lifetime. Second Thessalonians speaks about "the secret power of lawlessness" which was "already at work" when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. Paul told the Thessalonians that before the Messiah returned, there would be a "falling away" (apostasy, 'departure from truth'). Notice this was written about "religious people." This departure from "the truth" would then open the door for something called "the man of lawlessness" to come forth. This "coming of the lawless one" would be accompanied by "all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders" which would "deceive those who are perishing."

"They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved," Paul writes. "For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie." In preparation for the coming of the Messiah, God is also sending a powerful revelation to graciously expose the ancient lie, so that those who love the truth can depart from error and be freed from the bewitching influence of the spirit of lawlessness.

In 1989, Ted Turner of CNN declared the Ten Commandments obsolete, and offered his own "Ten Voluntary Initiatives" as an alternative to God's outdated laws. No one should take Turner seriously, of course, but he did make one comment that deserves our attention. "Nobody around likes to be commanded," he said.



**"Commandments are out." (Turner's Commandments," Peoria Journal Star, 27 Oct., 1989, section D, p.22).**

**Answer for yourself:** Christians may scoff at Turner's idea of replacing God's laws with human ideas, yet is this not the very thing the Church has done with some of God's commandments?

We have replaced the 24-hour, seventh-day Sabbath with an hour or two of Sunday morning worship; we have replaced the Biblical holy days with holidays of pagan origin; we have replaced God's dietary guidelines with our own ideas about what we should eat, and we have replaced giving the tithe to places ONLY where God has placed his name to the general fund of churches who use the LORD'S moneys in any way they desire. For your information the tithe in the Bible is to go to ONLY three categories or receptacles: 1) the widows, orphans, sick, lame blind, etc., 2) you are to keep part of your tithe to celebrate the LORD'S Festivals, Sabbaths, and help the poor to observe them with you, and 3) to the Levite or the "teacher" (not the preacher..for once you are taught, then it is you in the pew who are to preach to the world) who teaches the truth of God's Word and not the by-laws of your particular denomination.

**Answer for yourself:** Do you not realize that if your church does not distribute the LORD'S tithe accurately then you are a party to "robbing God" and you have placed yourself and your family "under a curse?"

Having said that you can now better understand the following question.

**Answer for yourself:** After a person has been forgiven and justified by faith, where should he look for moral instruction?

**Answer for yourself:** Should he look to God's commandments to tell him how to live the Christian life, or should he ignore God's commandments and live according to man's suggestions, denominational guidelines, or other's religious recommendations which often contradict Scripture?

Even Scofield, in spite of all his anti-law bias and nomophobia, concedes that the Old Testament commandments "are used in the distinctively Christian Scriptures as an instruction in righteousness." (The Scofield Reference Bible, ed. C. I. Scofield, New York: Oxford University Press, 1917, p.1245).

In Against Marcion, Tertullian accuses Marcion and his followers of "forbidding what [God] commands and commanding what he forbids." (Tertullian, IV.1). The influence of Marcion continues to do this very same thing in the Church today. Mainstream Christianity has criticized believers for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, for celebrating the Biblical holy days like Passover instead of Easter, for practicing the dietary laws (which is taught by James for all Gentile believers in Jesus in Acts 15 as he quotes from the Laws of Noah for believing Gentiles), for placing one's tithe in other places than the local church (the storehouse which was to receive "all the tithe" is a food barn...none of the tithe was every allowed by God to be used for church building payments or administration), and for refusing to shave their beards...all things that God has commanded. And, like Marcion, Mainstream Christianity often commands what God forbids: "Forget the Sabbath. Ignore the holy days and dietary laws, bring your tithe to the storehouse for the church is "the storehouse" (which it is not!). And shave that beard, so you'll look like a Christian!" Many Bible colleges and seminaries command their students to shave the beard, in spite of God's command in Lev.19:27.

Marcion, like many church leaders today, misused the words of Jesus and the words of Paul to support this nomophobic, anti-Jewish, pro-Paul gospel. Tertullian rightly points out that Jesus' verbal attacks upon the teachers of the Law were not aimed at the Law itself but man's perversion and misuse of God's Law. "He is not criticizing the burdens of the law," Tertullian writes. The burdens Jesus criticized were, according to Tertullian, "those which they piled on of their own, teaching for precepts the doctrines of men." (Ibid., IV.27). You only have to review the previous paragraph to reacquaint yourself with several examples where by religious men have substituted church programs, denominational structures, and the commandments of well-intentioned religious men for the commandments of God.

Tertullian shows the importance Jesus attached to keeping the commandments when he writes about the rich young ruler who approached Jesus: "So when he is asked by that certain man, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do

to obtain possession of eternal life?', he inquired whether he knew --which means, was keeping -- the Creator's commandments. Come now, Marcion, and all you dear brethren who find yourself immersed in the offensiveness of that heretic, will you be bold enough to say **"Did Christ here abolish those former commands...?" No way!**

Tertullian opposes Marcion's misuse of Paul's writings by pointing out the "Jewishness" of Paul's faith, and then asking, "What had (Paul) still to do with Jewish custom, if he was the destroyer of Judaism?" (Ibid., V.5).

He also refers to Romans 7:7 to combat Marcion's hatred of the Law: "What shall we say then? That the law is sin? God forbid." Shame on you, Marcion. When Paul states "God forbid" the apostle expresses abhorrence of those who were complaining against the law...Yet he adds even more: "The law is holy, and its commandment is just, and good." (Ibid., V.14). As Tertullian points out later, "you cannot make a promoter of the law into an opponent of it." (Ibid., V.17). This correct view by this Gentile teacher has, for the most part, being completely overlooked and replaced by a faith that rejects the Law that Jesus accepted.

Unfortunately, the organized Church, not only would ignore men like Tertullian and other, but they also ignored Paul's positive statements about the Law and Jesus' warning about the necessity of continuing to practice and teach the Old Testament commandments. (See Matt.5:17-19.)

## **MARCION'S CANON INFLUENCED THE THEOLOGY OF THOSE WHO WOULD WRITE ABOUT THE FAITH LATER**

The Epistle of Barnabas, an influential letter written in the Second Century, indicates the general direction the Gentile Church was heading in its attitude to the Old Testament. "The main theme of Barnabas", writes one church historian, "is a spiritualization of the Mosaic law." The writer holds that the were "wrong to take the Old Testament literally." (Smith, M. A. From Christ to Constantine, Intervarsity Press, 1971, p.39). Everything in the Old Testament was allegorized to give it a Christian meaning, thus destroying the literal meaning which tells us what to do and what not to do. Even the commandments were taken figuratively, because, according to Barnabas, "the law of Moses had never been meant to be taken literally." (Eerdman's Handbook To The History Of Christianity, ed. Tim Dowley, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977, p.102). I find it rather difficult for a Jew who grew up loving the Torah to ever express such a diabolical view of the Law of God that all Jews grew up loving. To the Gentiles the dietary restrictions were said to represent not actual food, but various kinds of sinful habits. What well meaning Gentiles fail to understand is that in Rabbinic interpretation one always begins with the "Peshat" method of interpretation which is ALWAYS the plain, ordinary and simple meaning of the verse...which is always understood in a literal understanding. So to discount the first level of Scripture interpretation is quite surprising to those who know the methods of Hebraic Scriptural Hermeneutic.

Remembering that Marcion's New Testament existed before Justin, then it is not hard to understand that Justin Martyr's Dialogue With Trypho The Jew also shows early Christianity's negative attitude toward the Law. Trypho the Jew expresses bewilderment when he tells Justin, "[You Christians] spurn the commands...and then try to convince us [Torah-observant Jews] that you know God, when you fail to do those things that every God-fearing person would do. If, therefore, you can give a satisfactory reply to these charges and can show us on what you place your hopes, even though you refuse to obey the Law, we will listen to you most willingly, and then we can go on and do in the same manner our other differences." (Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, ch.10. Ibid., ch.11, 14. 20Ibid., ch.47).

Justin replies by saying that the Law is "abrogated," "voided," and tells Trypho, "You understand all in a carnal way." (Ibid., ch. 11, 14).

## **BUT NOT EVERYONE WAS DECEIVED BY MARCION'S FIRST NEW TESTAMENT AND HIS ANTI-JEWISH THEOLOGY**



Not all followers of the Messiah were influenced by the nomophobic, anti-Old Testament, pro-Paul gospel of Marcion. There is historical evidence of several groups of believers who practiced the Law as an expression of their faith God along with their belief in Yeshua as the Messiah.

After Trypho asks Justin about the possibility of believing in Yeshua as the Messiah and continuing to observe the commandments, Justin writes his reply: "Yes, Trypho, I conceded, there are some Christians who...desire to observe as many of the Mosaic precepts as possible...precepts which we think were instituted because of your hardness of heart...while at the same time they place their hope in Christ..." (Ibid., ch. 47).

**Answer for yourself:** Dear Child of God....did you hear history speak to you through Justin and his anti-Semitism and anti-Judaic theology?

Well into the second century the Gentile Christians (believers in the God of Israel as well as believers in the Jewish Messiah) kept the Law and the testimony of Jesus (see Rev.12:17 & 14:12)! Justin, previously a pagan philosopher who was in times past a stranger to the covenant promises, alien to the commonwealth of Israel, without hope and without God and who grew up knowing no restraints to his flesh, obviously disagreed with these Law-keeping Messianic believers, but he does acknowledge their existence. Notice that the Messianic community had not discarded the Law but continued to teach all nations to observe those things commanded by Jesus! Some would obey and others, like Justin, would find excuses not to submit to the rule of God over their lives in many areas...today we call this "Salad Bar Christianity." The uninformed Christian usually "picks" and "chooses" what he will obey and what he will not submit to.

The best-known of these groups who believed in Yeshua and practiced the Torah were the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. There were other groups, more obscure and far less orthodox, such as the Elchasaites and the Pseudoclementines. (Austin, Bill R. Austin's Topical History of Christianity, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983, p.72f).

Some doctrinal errors in some of these groups probably contributed to the decision of the Mainstream Gentile Church to adopt Marcion's anti-law, anti-Jewish attitude. One writer notes that "Jewish Christianity in various forms continued as a disturbing factor until almost the Fifth Century. (Ibid., p. 73).

It is interesting that this is the same time that Marcion's heresy supposedly "died out." Once Marcion's error (in a modified, subdued form) had been fully assimilated into the Mainstream Church, "Jewish Christianity" was no longer a "disturbing factor" because the Law-keeping Christians were greatly outnumbered by those who had adopted Marcion's attitude toward the Law. The number of those who upheld both the Torah and the Messiah (see Rev.12:17 & 14:12) was so insignificant by the Fifth Century that the Mainstream Church no longer considered them a threat. But let us never forget that in obedience to the Great Commission the Jewish disciples of Jesus went into all the world (to the Gentiles) and taught them to observe those things that Yeshua taught. This is the true Great Commission.

The Good news I share with you is that "the remnant" who observed the original faith of Jesus and adhered to the faith once given to the saints exists today! For many they could now be written off as a fringe group, and conveniently ignored. Though they were few in number compared to the now-Marcionized Mainstream Church, these groups who upheld both the Torah and the Messiah continued to exist until at least as late as the Tenth Century (1000 years). (Flusser, David Jewish Sources in Early Christianity, New York: Adama Books, 1987, p.88).

While Mainstream Christianity, influenced by Marcion, de-emphasized the Law and over-emphasized Paul, groups such as the Ebionites totally rejected Paul, viewing him as an apostate and enemy of the Law.

**The solution is not to reject either Paul or the Law; the solution is to view Paul's writings in a way that will allow them to harmonize with what the rest of the Bible says about the Law.**

**Answer for yourself:** How should a disciple of Yeshua view Paul's epistles?

## **WHAT WE MUST REMEMBER BEFORE READING MARCION'S NEW TESTAMENT...THE LEGACY OF WHAT WE CARRY TODAY IN OUR BIBLES**

If you have been faithful to study our web site up to this point, then you realize that the canon of the New Testament was not recognized until 380 C.E. and the very first collection of such writing was by Marcion in 140 C.E. A lot of changes, additions and deletions occurred during this 240 year period. Much would be changed after that as well. Understand that Marcion's anti-Jewish theology was incorporated among the pages of documents which others would build upon later in the canonization of the New Testament. Of course changes, additions, and deletions were made over the years, especially in light of the successive Catholic Church Councils. This is hard fact. But what we must realize is that when we read these documents called the New Testament today that among the writing we have both passages reflecting what Yeshua both believed and practiced as well as what he opposed. Telling the difference is the hard part. But without such an awareness one is gullible to accept everything written in the New Testament without question. Such is not only unwise but foolish.

## **SO HOW AM I TO READ THE NEW TESTAMENT AND TELL TRUTH FROM ERROR?**

To complete answer that question the whole of this web site is dedicated. But at least let us start with some basic principles for reading the New Testament accurately in search for truth. For those who desire to be faithful and to live "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," seven guidelines are listed below. The Bible student should keep these guidelines in mind when reading Paul's writings in order to arrive at a correct Biblical understanding.

### **PRINCIPLE 1: LOOK AT THE OVER-ALL BIBLICAL CONTEXT**

Paul's epistles, like any other part of Scripture, must be viewed in the light of the entire Bible. This means that when we are dealing with the Law, we must not focus in on a few statements Paul made, and ignore everything else the Bible says about God's Law. As pointed out earlier, Paul's writings make up approximately 5% of the Bible. Paul's writings must be understood in a way that will make them compatible with what the other 95% of the Bible says. In other words, let the other 95% of the Bible interpret the 5% that Paul wrote.

It is important to remember that for many years, the Old Testament was the only Bible the Early Church had. The New Testament writings were gradually accepted into the canon of the Scriptures over four hundred years. It was not until about the middle of the Second Century that the term "the Scriptures" was ever used in referring to the New Testament. (Smith, p.63). Therefore, when New Testament writers mention "the Scriptures" or the commandments," they are referring to the Old Testament!

### **PRINCIPLE 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The New Jerusalem Bible, in its Introduction to Paul, makes this statement: "It is important to remember that Paul's letters were not meant as theological treatises: most of them represent his response to a particular situation in a particular church....Paul's letters do not give any systematic and exhaustive exposition of his teaching; they presuppose the oral teaching which preceded them, and enlarge and comment only upon certain



points of that. (The New Jerusalem Bible, ed. Henry Wansbrough, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1985, p.1852f).

Because Paul often wrote to correct particular problems in particular churches, we must have some knowledge of the situation Paul was addressing if we are to understand his writings. Sometimes the problem can be inferred from Paul's remarks, but often we are left with little or no knowledge of the situations Paul was dealing with. In reality, except for the epistle of Ephesians which was intended to be passed around among various churches, the vast majority of Paul's letters were "private mail" from one party to another. It is not out of question to even consider that we are "reading another's mail" which was never intended for us since we do not find ourselves with such unique problems that prompted the letters.

**Answer for yourself:** Surely we are not guilty of tampering with the mail are we?

Theologians often try to reconstruct the historical backgrounds of the epistles, and make educated guesses about the problems Paul was addressing. This can be a noble effort, if it is done in a sincere attempt to come to a clearer understanding of what Paul taught. Unfortunately, many people come to an understanding of Paul that contradicts what the rest of the Bible teaches, either by incorrectly reconstructing the historical background, or by ignoring it altogether.

### PRINCIPLE 3: PETER'S WARNING

It is important to bear in mind Peter's warning that Paul's letters are not easy to understand: "His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position (2 Pet. 3:16f).

Those with little or no knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures are especially apt to misinterpret Paul's writings to their own ruin. Notice, it is not the Law-keeping disciples of Yeshua who distort Paul's epistles -- it is "lawless men" that Peter warns us about.

### PRINCIPLE 4: YESHUA'S WARNING

Early in His ministry, Yeshua spoke this warning to his followers: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.5:17-19).

Yeshua's warning seems plain and simple enough to understand, yet many Christians mistakenly believe that by fulfilling the Law, he thereby abolished it. **This is exactly what he is warning us not to think!** "I have come to fulfill the Law," he says, "but do not even think that by fulfilling it, I am thereby abolishing it."

Sometimes it is easier for people outside Mainstream Christianity to see the blindness of Christians in this area. The Jewish Encyclopedia quotes Jesus' warning of Matt.5:17, and then makes this bold statement: "The rejection of the Law by Christianity, therefore, was a departure from its Christ." (The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903, Vol.V., p.52).

In an article with the catchy title, "Jesus Was Not a Christian," the writer points out that "Jesus certainly wouldn't have been recognized as a Christian throughout his entire life." He "scrupulously adhered to the law of Moses" and "enjoined his disciples to keep every detail of the Torah." (John Murray Smoot, Jesus Was Not a Christian, A Way in the Wilderness, ed. M. G. Einspruch, Baltimore: The Lederer Foundation, 1981, p.28).

A story in the New York Yiddish Forward tells of a reporter's encounter with an old Hasidic Jew in Paris years ago. This Jew had a fervent faith in Jesus as the Messiah. When the reporter asked him about the compatibility of Orthodox Judaism and belief in Jesus, the old man replied, "Who then should believe in him -- the gentiles?" The reporter describes the old man's remarks this way: "He said that only Jews can truly accept belief in Jesus as the Messiah and regard him as the last prophet, for gentiles can never accept such a lofty faith. It is next to impossible for them to walk in his ways, for first of all, Yeshua, as he called him, commanded to observe all the Jewish laws, the entire Torah, and gentiles do not even know this." (J. Feldman, "Yozel's Hasid," The Ox, the Ass, the Oyster, ed. Henry and Marie Einspruch, Baltimore: The Lederer Foundation, 1975, p.74.

Of course it is not impossible for Gentiles to accept and practice such a lofty faith.

**Answer for yourself:** The question is, will they do it? Or will they continue to cling to the lies of Marcion? How about you?

## PRINCIPLE 5: PAUL'S POSITIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE LAW

Many Christians overlook or choose to ignore the positive things Paul said about the Law. He writes, for example, "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (Rom.7:12). Paul says, "For in my inner being I delight in God's law" and "I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law" (Rom.7:22,25).

He tells Timothy, "We know that the law is good if one uses it properly" (1 Tim.1:8). To the Corinthians he writes, "Keeping God's commandments is what counts" (1 Cor.7:19). Even when explaining the righteousness that comes by faith, Paul is careful to make sure his readers know that their faith does not give them an excuse to ignore God's Law: "Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law" (Rom.3:31).

## PRINCIPLE 6: PAUL'S NEGATIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE LAW

Paul, in his negative statements about the Law, was not criticizing the Law itself, but man's misuse of the Law.

The Law was meant to be a moral guide for a people already justified by faith, but some people in Paul's day were depending on their Law-keeping as the means of their justification before God. What Paul criticized was not Law-keeping itself, but making Law-keeping the basis of one's justification before God.

Between the Babylonian Captivity and the time of the Messiah, Israel developed an erroneous understanding of the Law's purpose. The Jews who first returned from Babylon knew that their exile had been the result of the breaking of God's laws; therefore, they put a heavy emphasis on the Law when they returned to their homeland. Unfortunately, this new emphasis eventually developed a theology that caused some people to erroneously view Law-keeping, rather than faith, as the key to their justification. Paul's negative statements about the Law were simply his attempts to correct this erroneous use of the Law.

One writer puts it this way: "Paul, in his epistles, affirms the law, yet condemns the wrong emphasis men place upon it. In this sense he is turning believers back to the original intent of the law, it being a rule for godly living for those who are already redeemed. He rejects the later shift towards making it a means of salvation." (Michael Schiffman, A Pauline Understanding of the Place of the Law for New Covenant Believers," The Messianic Outreach, 7:3, Spring 1988, p.9).

Another author says basically the same thing when he writes, "Paul rejects the law as a method of salvation but upholds it as a standard for Christian conduct." (Bacchiocchi, Samuele The Sabbath in the New Testament, Berrien Springs, MI: University Printers, 1985, p.101).



**If we ignore this fact, we will twist the writings of Paul to our own loss, as Marcion and other lawless men have done throughout the centuries.**

## **PRINCIPLE 7: PAUL'S EXAMPLE**

**Actions speak louder than words, the well-known proverb says. If we truly want to understand Paul's attitude towards the Law, we must look at his actions as well as his words.**

**Even in Paul's own lifetime, false rumors were circulating that Paul taught people "to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs" (Acts 21:21). To dispel these false accusations, the elders of Jerusalem had Paul go with four men who had taken a vow (a Nazarite vow), telling Paul that in this way "all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law" (Acts 21:24).**

**To his Jewish accusers from Jerusalem, Paul said, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple" (Acts 25:8). To the Jews in Rome, he repeated this same testimony: "Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people, or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered prisoner into the hands of the Romans" (Acts 28:17).**

**Paul's Law-Keeping included worshipping on the Sabbath (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 16:13;17:1f,10; 18:4,19), celebrating the Biblical holy days (Acts 20:6,16), and taking a Nazarite vow (Acts 18:18) in which he was to bring blood sacrifices and sin offerings after the cross of Yeshua no less (Num. 6). Paul did not do away with the Law as you have been told.**

**It is very clear that Paul continued to keep the Law after he met Yeshua whom he believed to be the Messiah. The only thing that changed was Paul's reason for keeping the Law. Before, he had kept it in an effort to be justified before God. After meeting Yeshua, he found the justification he had sought through his Law-keeping. Paul was justified through faith, and the Law was internalized, "written upon the heart," as Jeremiah prophesied it would be (31:31-34). Now he desired to obey God's commandments because of the inward impulse of his new nature. His obedience was no longer the result of an external compulsion to justify himself before God by Law-keeping. Thus, he was free to obey "in the way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code" (Rom.7:6).**

**By keeping the Law, in the right way and for the right reasons, Paul left an example for all disciples to follow, Jew or non-Jew. Some people seem to think that only Jewish believers were expected to continue practicing Torah. The so-called "Great Commission" rules out this possibility. When Jesus instructed His Jewish disciples to go to "all nations [Gentiles]," he told them to teach the Gentile nations "to obey ever thing I have commanded you [My Jewish disciples]" (Matt.28:18ff). He commanded his Jewish disciples to obey the Torah (Matt.5:17-19 & 23:1-3), and they were to teach the Gentiles to do it.**

**The key to godly living is not to ignore the Law and elevate Paul, as Marcion did. Nor is the solution to overemphasize the Law and reject Paul, as the Ebionites and others did. The solution is to do what Paul said to do: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Messiah" (1 Cor.11:1). If we truly follow Paul's example, as he followed the example of Messiah, we will begin to practice the Old Testament commandments that the Church has ignored or changed.**

**A. W. Tozer wrote, "Probably no other portion of the Scriptures can compare with the Pauline epistles when it comes to making artificial saints. (Gems From Tozer, England: Send the Light Trust, 1969, p.18). Let us avoid artificial sainthood by keeping in mind the above-mentioned seven guidelines for understanding Paul's epistles: 1) over-all Biblical context, 2) historical context, 3) Peter's warning, 4) Jesus' warning, 5) Paul's positive statements about the Law, 6) Paul's negative statements about the Law, 7) Paul's example.**

**As we let the naked truth of Holy Scripture renew our minds and change our thinking, the sunlight of God's Word will dispel the mist of the ghost of Marcion. We will find ourselves transformed as the fog lifts, and as we**

**see the Law as God always meant it to be seen: as something positive, holy, and good, "if one uses it properly" (1 Tim.1:8).**

**Let those who wish to wholeheartedly follow the Messiah begin to learn the commandments, practice them, and teach them to others, for "whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.5:19). As we banish the legacy and influence of Marcion, the "spirit of lawlessness" from our theology, we will see the commandments not as a yoke of bondage, but as a moral guide by which we can joyfully live a life that is pleasing to the Heavenly Father. Then we will be able to rejoice in God's commandments as the psalmist did: "I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws...I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches...I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws. I hold fast to Your statutes, O Lord; do not let me be put to shame. I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free...I will always obey Your law, forever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out Your precepts...Great peace have they who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble" (Ps.119:7,14,30-32,44f,165).**

**Shalom.**





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## MARCION'S "GOSPEL OF THE LORD" OR THE "GOSPEL OF LUKE"...WHICH CAME FIRST?

The question of priority, as between the "gospel of Marcion" and the later "gospel of Luke", is one of the most interesting and intriguing stories we find in the history of New Testament studies.

From the commencement of the third, down to the beginning of the present century, it has been fashionable to accuse Marcion of corrupting the Gospel of Luke; the emphatic and oft-repeated assertions of Tertullian and Epiphanius to that effect, having been deemed sufficient authority.

Bishop Marsh was one of the first to do Marcion justice. He said there was no proof that Marcion used Luke's Gospel at all [Notes to Michaelis, vol.3, pt. 2, p. 160]. Since then, many of the most intelligent German critics have come to the same conclusion; namely that it was not Marcion who corrupted the gospel tradition but Rome who refuted it by creating a later gospel tradition of their own which they presented in 180 C.E. to the world in the names of deceased apostles and Paul.

Baring-Gould also says: "Marcion was too conscientious and earnest a man, wilfully to corrupt a gospel" [Lost and Hostile Gospels, p.241].

It would seem from the sources consulted that it is not a stretch of the imagination to see that the Church of Sinope, where Marcion formerly resided, had been furnished by Paul with a collection of the records of the life and teaching of Christ; that Marcion thus obtained his gospel, and brought it to Rome [Ibid.].

Now we need to pay close attention to what some scholars admit. Again: "Marcion's Gospel contained a different arrangement of the narrative, from the canonical Luke, and was without many passages which it is not possible to believe he wilfully excluded," [Ibid p. 242]. Once I came to understand Marcion, Gnosticism, Marcion's unique brand of Gnostic theology then it became relatively easily to understand that key omissions in Marcion's collection of apostolic written tradition and Pauline written tradition could only be blamed upon the lack of existence of such writings in his day. No good reason can be found as to why Marcion would have not strengthened his position and theological arguments against the Jews and literalist Roman positions other than the fact that such passages did not exist at that time. They will be invented later by the Holy Roman Forgery Mill.

This becomes painfully evident when one contrast Marcion's New Testament with the later Roman Second New Testament and these omissions and additions compared line upon line. I was consistently shocked to see such passages omitted in Marcion's First New Testament which theologically would have supported his arguments against the Jews let along the "literalistic" Roman Church which mysteriously appear some 40 years later in the Roman refutation of Marcion's First New Testament. For the life of me I could not ever understand why key passages that would support and bolster Marcion's theological points from both apostolic tradition and Pauline tradition would be

omitted by Marcion if they had existed when he collected all the Pauline writings and apostolic traditions existing in his day.

Baring-Gould in his Lost and Hostile Gospels afterward speaks of differences of arrangement in Marcion's gospel which are unaccountable on the theory that Marcion corrupted Luke, and says that Marcion's Gospel was without several passages which apparently favor his views. [Ibid, p.243].

Canon Westcott is equally explicit in acquitting Marcion from the accusation made against him by the early fathers of the church. He says: "Tertullian and Epiphanius agree in affirming that Marcion altered the text of the books which he received, to suit his own views; and they quote many various readings in support of the assertion. Those which they cite from the epistles, are certainly insufficient to prove the point; and on the contrary, they go to show that Marcion preserved without alteration, the text which he found in his manuscript. Of the seven readings noticed by Epiphanius, (in the epistles), only two are unsupported by other authority: and it is altogether unlikely that Marcion changed other passages, when, as Epiphanius himself shows, he left untouched those which are most directly opposed to his system." -[Canon Westcott, History of the Canon, p.284].

**Answer for yourself:** Does it stand to reason that Marcion would leave passages in his collection of written apostolic tradition and the Pauline epistles which opposed what he believed and taught but yet omitted key passages that supported this Gnostic theology if they existed in the documents he collected?

Don't underestimate the hatred of the Church Father for anything opposed to what they considered "orthodoxy." Such hatred for truth and any that opposed the strict mind control of Rome would be branded a "heretic." Marcion is a perfect example of one who taught what the earliest Christians held to be true and dear; that "the Christ" was a "Divine Concept" within all mankind; exemplified in a theophany, Jesus, who was sent from Heaven. For Marcion his Christ was not a fleshly person as Rome would maintain later. Such hatred by Rome will ultimately result in myriads of persecutions that will in the end slaughter over 18,000,000 believers during the Dark Ages that opposed the Mother Roman Church in one form or another.

Some writers still persist in repeating the old slander. But the more candid and intelligent opinion of Westcott and Baring-Gould, is supported by Semler, Griesbach, Loeffler, Schmidt, Schleiermacher, Hahn, and many other scholars. Simply said the hatred of such reputed Church Fathers like Tertullian and Epiphanius caused a slander of not only Marcion and the faith of the earliest Christians but was the impetus for the literary corruption of the First New Testament where these earliest concepts and religious beliefs about "the Christ" have been lost to all but those with the necessary knowledge to know better; few possess it.

These writers, perceiving how little reliance is to be placed upon the statements of the fathers, in matters of critical exegesis, or of authorship, or upon their assertions concerning the heretics, have examined carefully the text of Marcion, and finding the statements of Tertullian and Epiphanius unsupported by internal evidence, have rejected them altogether.

**WHICH WAS FIRST WRITTEN...MARCION'S GOSPEL OR THE GOSPEL OF LUKE WE HAVE TODAY?**

Let us now see if we cannot ascertain with reasonable certainty which was first written; the Gospel of Luke or the Gospel of Marcion. The question of priority, in this case, is closely connected with that of brevity.

The first three chapters of Luke were entirely wanting in Marcion, except the opening clause in the third chapter, which was the commencement of the Gospel of Marcion: "In the fifteenth year of the



***reign of Tiberius Caesar."*** The balance of the first chapter of Marcion is contained with some variations in the fourth of Luke. **About half that chapter is wanting entirely, in Marcion.**

After passing this, the different chapters of the two gospels correspond, the 2nd of Marcion with the 5th of Luke, the 3rd of Marcion with the 6th of Luke, and so on.

The Gospel of Luke is the most copious throughout. **The number of verses in Luke in excess of those in Marcion, is as follows:** In chapter 7, seven verses: in ch. 8, one; in ch. 11, ten; in ch. 12, three; in ch. 13, seventeen; in ch. 14, five; in ch. 15, twenty-two; in ch. 18, four; in ch. 19, twenty; in ch. 20, twelve; in ch. 21, three; in ch. 22, thirteen; in ch. 23, one, and in ch. 24, four: **a total 122 verses in Luke which are not in Marcion's earliest "gospel."** **To this add the excess of 23 verses in the 4th chapter of Luke, and we have altogether 145 verses, or more than three average chapters. Add the first three chapters of Luke, which are entirely wanting in Marcion, and the result is, more than six chapters, or more than one-fourth of the entire Gospel of Luke, wanting in Marcion.**

**Answer for yourself:** Did Rome just happen to find these "missing gospel passages" or were then invented to counter what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" and Rome used creative license in the names of supposed Apostolic followers of Jesus to change what they did not want to accept? **THINK**

*When you begin to see just what "theologically" the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ"; namely that it is a Divine Concept among and within all mankind and not just one historical person as we have been led to believe, then you should see that these "key" added sections to Marcion's earliest "gospel" are intended to present such "literal-human" theology as imposed upon "the Christ." Take a look back again as what we have shown and see that these added portions to Marcion's gospel are about a human birth, human infancy, etc.; a human being presented as the "one" and only "Christ." Again this is totally against the earliest concepts of "the Christ" [logos] as handed down since time began and which was also believed by the earliest Christians.*

But this is not all. **In a number of places, the verses of Marcion are shorter. Then, again, two or more verses of Luke are contained, in substance, in one of Marcion, and in one place, nine verses of Luke in two of Marcion.** This phenomena is called "the Law of Accretion" whereby words or sentences are added later thereby enlarging a prior piece of literature. In other words the New Testament gets larger and more voluminous after Marcion's collection of it as it existed in his day.

## LUKE AND MARCION COMPARED

Leaving out of view, for the present the wholesale accumulation of matter, aggregating 315 verses, the law of accretion will be well illustrated by those cases where one or more verses in Marcion are found swollen into several in Luke, or where a single passage has additions. They are as follows:

1.

MARCION, ch. 1, v.4.	LUKE ch. 4, v.34.
Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, Jesus?	Saying, Let (us) alone; what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth?

The difference is important. According to Matthew, the parents of Jesus, when they returned from Egypt, being warned of God in a dream, turned aside, (they were going to Bethlehem or Jerusalem,) into the parts of Galilee,

that a certain prophecy might be fulfilled. The language does not imply that Nazareth was their residence; all the more strange since many believe the messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

The theory of the author of Luke was, that Nazareth was their residence. Accordingly, in this passage, which, though followed in Mark, has no parallel in Matthew; Jesus is addressed as "of Nazareth," a phrase not in Marcion. Yet the writer of the Gospel of Luke totally disagrees.

## II.

A corresponding variation will be found in

<b>MARCION, 1.10.</b>	<b>LUKE, 4.16.</b>
And he came to Nazareth, and as his custom was, etc.	And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, etc.

These are probably interpolations, made for the purpose of establishing Nazareth as the birth-place of Jesus. Again we now know that Marcion and the earliest Gnostic Christians understood "the Christ" entirely different from the way we have been instructed by Roman and Protestant theology. Rome will counter Marcion's First New Testament by given "flesh" to this "Christ" as if "the Christ" was flesh and bone. We see this again perfectly as "being brought up" would indicate a rearing instead of a descent from Heaven as Marcion and others believed. Marcion's Gospel of the Lord began with: *1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, 2. [Pontius Pilatus being the Governor of Judea] Jesus came down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was...*

We see clearly the "descent" of the Heavenly Logos, the Gnostic Redeemer from heaven. This Gnostic Savior had no fleshly body but was a pure Spiritual apparition among men. Thus we find no mention in the earliest New Testament of a fleshly Jesus as "the Christ." We find no infancy narratives or any of the events we normally associate with the Christmas story. Again we need to understand that these parts of the Second New Testament only surface after 180 C.E. with the influence and work of Irenaeus as he counters Marcion's First New Testament with one from Rome's "literalism."

## III.

<b>MARCION, 3.19.</b>	<b>LUKE 6.19.</b>
And the whole multitude sought to touch him.	And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went Virtue out of him, and healed (them) all

There is no reason why Marcion, who had not rejected the miracles of Christ, should omit the closing sentence. It is more probable that it was added in Luke, to give expression to a very natural inference on the part of the writer, as to the object of the multitude in pressing forward toward Jesus, and seeking to touch him. Again we see the emphasis upon "touching flesh" inserted into the later editing of Marcion's New Testament.

There is no parallel in the other gospels.

## IV.

<b>MARCION, 4.29</b>	<b>LUKE, 7.36.</b>
And going into the house of a	And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he



Pharisee, he ate with him.	went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.
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Lest you think that the risen Christ could not "eat" and that by "eating" then one had to have a fleshly body let me remind you that Christ said: Luke 22:18 18 *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (KJV)* It would seem that in a "resurrected" spiritual state, which the Gnostic Christians understood "the Christ," eating was possible in some sort of way. This not make it mandatory that the Jesus of Marcion had to possess flesh.

V.

JESUS AND THE SINFUL WOMAN.

MARCION, 4, 30.	LUKE, 7.37 and 38.
But a sinful woman, standing near, before his feet, washed them with tears, and anointed them, and kissed them.	37. And behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that (Jesus) sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,  38. And stood at his feet, behind (him,) weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe (them) with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed (them) with the ointment.

This touching incident, simply and beautifully told in the sixteen Greek words of Marcion, is spun out, by the author of Luke, into more than three times the number of words, with no improvement in the story.

The washing of the feet of Jesus, which in Marcion is left as a figurative expression, denoting the great grief of the woman, is stated in Luke as an actual fact. while weeping, "she began to wash his feet with tears." Then, having washed them, she must needs "wipe them with the hairs of her head."

There can be but little doubt, that Marcion was first written, and that the author of Luke drew upon his imagination in filling up the text.

Again, there is a similar variation, in the following reference to the same transaction:

VI.

MARCION, 4.36.	LUKE, 7.44 to 46.
And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest me no water for my feet. She has washed my feet with her tears, and has anointed them, and kissed them.	44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped (them) with the hairs of her head  45. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.  46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

The use here, by Jesus himself, of the figurative expression, "she hath washed my feet with tears," misled the author of Luke into conceiving, and hence expressing, a literal and complete washing of

**feet, followed by wiping them in the manner described.**

**This account is not in the other canonical gospels. It is simply a question between Marcion and Luke.**

## **VII.**

### **JESUS REBUKING THE STORM.**

<b>MARCION, 5.22.</b>	<b>LUKE, 8.23, 24.</b>
<b>He was sleeping with the sailors, and he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the sea.</b>	<b>22. But as they sailed, he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled (with water), and were in jeopardy.</b>
	<b>24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying: Master, Master, we perish! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.</b>

**The language of Marcion, as given by Epiphanius, is highly elliptical. It was probably preceded by some sentence having reference to the storm. The text of the synoptics is more copious; especially Mark, in which a pillow is provided for the head of Jesus.**

## **VIII.**

### **HEALING OF THE WOMAN**

<b>MARCION, 5.41</b>	<b>LUKE, 8.43 to 45.</b>
<b>And a woman, touching him, was healed of an issue of the blood. And the Lord said, who has touched me?</b>	<b>43. And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed by any,</b>
	<b>44. Came behind (him), and touched the border of his garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchd.</b>
	<b>45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they who were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press [thee], and sayest thou, Who touched me?</b>

**If these accounts come from a common manuscript, it had passed through many hands, before reaching the author of Luke.**

## **IX, X.**

<b>MARCION, 6.22.</b>	<b>LUKE, 9.22.</b>
<b>Saying: The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be put to death, and after three days, rise again.</b>	<b>Saying: The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.</b>
<b>MARCION, 6.30.</b>	<b>LUKE, 9.30,31.</b>
<b>And behold two men talked with him; Elias and Moses in glory.</b>	<b>30. And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elias;</b>
	<b>31. Who appeared in glory and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.</b>



# XI, XII, XIII, XIV.

<p><b>MARCION, 6.34.</b></p> <p>From the cloud a voice, saying: This is my beloved son.</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 9.35.</b></p> <p>And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved son. Hear him.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 6.40.</b></p> <p>And he said to them, O, faithless generation; how long shall I suffer you?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 9.41.</b></p> <p>And Jesus answering said: O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 7.21.</b></p> <p>In that hour, he rejoiced in the spirit, and said: I thank thee, Lord of heaven, that, etc. (balance of the verse substantially as in Luke.)</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.21.</b></p> <p>In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that, etc.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 7.25.</b></p> <p>Master, doing what shall I obtain life?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.25.</b></p> <p>Master, what shall I do to inherit <i>eternal</i> life?</p>

The word *aioion*, (eternal,) was inserted by the author of Luke, to make more clear the meaning of Marcion.

The argument of Tertullian, (adv. Mar. 4.25), that Marcion struck out *aionion*, so that the question might be confined to this life, is weak and untenable. Again Tertullian has not been fair in his analysis of Marcion and misleads his readers; needless to say centuries of Christians who read his works.

# XV, XVI, XVII.

<p><b>MARCION, 7.26.</b></p> <p>And he said unto him, what is written in the law?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.26.</b></p> <p>He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 8.5.</b></p> <p>And shall go unto him at midnight, asking for three loaves?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.5.</b></p> <p>And shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 8.6.</b></p> <p>Ask and it shall be given. (<i>Aiteite, kai dotheesetai.</i>)</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.9.</b></p> <p>Ask, and it shall be given you. (<i>Aiteite, kai dotheesetai humin.</i>)</p>
<p><b>MARCION 8. 7, 8</b></p> <p>Who of you, being a father, if his son ask a fish, instead of a fish, will give to him a serpent? Or instead of an egg, a scorpion?</p> <p>If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your Father who is in heaven?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.11 to 13.</b></p> <p>11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if (he ask) a fish, will he for a fish, give him a serpent?</p> <p>12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?</p> <p>13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall (your) heavenly Father</p>

give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?	
<b>MARCION, 8.24.</b>  This is an evil generation; they seek a sign; no sign shall be given it.	<b>LUKE, 11.29.</b>  This is an evil generation; they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet.
<b>MARCION, 9.4.</b>  I say unto you, be not afraid of them that kill the body; fear him who has power after killing, to cast into hell. ( <i>eis geenan.</i> )	<b>LUKE, 12.4, 5.</b>  4. But I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.  5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. ( <i>eis teen geenan.</i> ) Yea, I say unto you, fear him.

**The last passage illustrates, throughout, the prevailing practice of verbal accumulation.** The language of Jesus, "I say unto you," becomes, when it reaches the author of Luke, "I say unto you, my friends;" "Be not afraid of them that kill the body," becomes, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do;" etc. **The "fish story" of Marcion is becoming longer as time passes and with Rome's additions to the First New Testament.**

XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI.

<b>MARCION, 9.5.</b>  Him shall also the Son of Man confess before God.	<b>LUKE, 12.8.</b>  Him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. [Similar difference in the next verse.]
<b>MARCION, 9.34.</b>  And if he shall come in the evening watch, and shall find them so, blessed are those servants.	<b>LUKE, 12.38.</b>  And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find (them) so, blessed are those servants.
<b>MARCION 9.42.</b>  And the Lord of that servant will come, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers.	<b>LUKE, 12.46.</b>  The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for (him), and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.
<b>MARCION, 13.29.</b>  Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. Not after one has risen from the dead, will they listen.	<b>LUKE, 16.29 to 31.</b>  29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.  30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one, went unto them from the dead, they will repent.  31. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.
<b>MARCION, 14.10.</b>  So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you.	<b>LUKE, 17.10.</b>  So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.



**MARCION, 15.31, 32.**

31. And it came to pass, as he came near to Jericho, a blind man cried out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

32. And when he had healed him, he said, thy faith hath saved thee.

**LUKE, 18.35 to 43.**

35. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way-side, begging:

36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38. And he cried, Saying: Jesus (thou) Son of David, have mercy on me!

39. And they who went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me!

40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him,

41. Saying: What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath saved thee.

43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, etc.

**Again the later "writing" of Luke's Gospel in response to Marcion's earliest Gospel of the Lord should be evident to all by now.**

**XXIV, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX.**

**MARCION, 16.9.**

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house.

**LUKE, 19.9.**

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

**MARCION, 19.4.**

And he communicated with the captains, how he might betray him unto them.

**LUKE, 22.4.**

And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

**MARCION, 19.14.**

And he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

**LUKE, 22.14.**

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

**MARCION, 19.51.**

And striking him, they said  
Prophecy; who is it that smote thee?

**LUKE, 22. 64.**

And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face; and asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

**The account in Marcion, besides being shorter, is the more natural. Being struck from behind, or by a stranger, Jesus was called upon to tell who struck him. It was an impulsive action. But the author of**

**Luke has the Jews deliberately blindfold Jesus, before striking him.**

**XXXI.**

<b>MARCION, 20.45.</b>  And crying out with a loud voice, he expired.	<b>LUKE, 23.46.</b>  And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.
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**These dying words of Jesus are not in either of the other three canonical gospels. They may have been taken by the author of Luke from the Acts of Pilate, or from a later version of the manuscript used by Marcion.**

**XXXII.**

<b>MARCION, 20.49.</b>  And behold, a man named Joseph, taking down the body, wrapped it up, and placed it in a hewn tomb.	<b>LUKE, 23.50 to 53.</b>  50. And behold, (there was) a man named Joseph, a counselor; (and he was) a good man, and a just;  51. (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.  52. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus  53. And he took it down and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher, that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.
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**XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI.**

<b>MARCION, 20.52.</b>  And returning, they rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.	<b>LUKE, 23. 56.</b>  And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.
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<b>MARCION, 21.6.</b>  He has risen; remember what he said, while yet living.	<b>LUKE, 24.6.</b>  He is not here, but is risen; re member how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee.
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<b>MARCION, 21.7.</b>  That it was necessary that the Son of Man should suffer, and be delivered up.	<b>LUKE, 24.7.</b>  Saying: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
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<b>MARCION, 21.37.</b>  And he said unto them, why are ye troubled?  Behold my hands and my feet, a spirit hath not bones, as ye see me have.	<b>LUKE, 24.38 and 39.</b>  38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?  39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
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THE OTHER SIDE

We will now give the cases where the text of Marcion is the more copious:

I.

MARCION, 5.20. LUKE, 8.21.

According to Volkmar, (though not in the schedule or scholion of Epiphanius), in this verse, after the words, "And he answered and said unto them," is the question, "Who are my mother and my brethren?" Balance of the Verse, same as in Luke.

Volkmar may have taken some of his Variations from the "Dialogues," etc., attributed to Origen, to which he appears to have given too much attention.

II, III, IV, V, VI.

MARCION, 9.26.  And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things of the flesh; ( <i>ton sarkikon</i> ).	LUKE, 12. 30.  And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.
MARCION, 14.2.  (On the authority of Volkmar.) It would be better for him if he had not been born; or if a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, etc. (This may have been the reading of Luke at that time. See Tertullian adv. Marcion, 4.35.)	LUKE, 17.2.  It were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, etc.
MARCION, 17.25.  But they who shall be accounted worthy of God, to obtain that world, etc.	LUKE, 20.35.  But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, etc.
MARCION, 20.2.  And they began to accuse him, saying: We found this fellow perverting the nation, and destroying the law and the prophets, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and turning away the women and children.	LUKE, 23.2.  And they began to accuse him saying: We found this (fellow) perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king.
MARCION, 21.5.  And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, those in white clothing said to them, etc.	LUKE, 24.5  And as they were afraid, and bowed down (their) faces to the earth, they said unto them, etc.

Here are six cases in Marcion, against thirty-six in Luke; or 35 new words in Marcion, to 660 in Luke. If to these we add 315 verses of Luke which are not in Marcion in any form, we have a ratio of 1 to 230.

*The strength of the argument, then, based upon the principle of accretion, would be 230 to 1, that the Gospel of Marcion was first written.*

## BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ORDER OF ARRANGEMENT OF GOSPEL MATERIALS?

But there is other evidence of priority. The Gospel of Marcion is more simple and natural, not only in the mode of expression, but in the order of arrangement.

In the fourth chapter of Luke, Jesus is represented as being tempted in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism; thence he returned into Galilee, and came to Nazareth; [Luke, 4. 16]; where his public ministry commenced. Now pay attention! But though commencing, at Nazareth, he is made to refer [v. 23], to works which he had done at Capernaum; a place to which he goes, afterward ;[v. 31.]

**Answer for yourself:** How can this be? This is out of order; somebody got it wrong and most likely miscopied an earlier manuscript from Marcion in the rewriting of the later New Testament. This means that an earlier copy, the copies of Marcion's collection, were as scholars tell us used by later writers of the gospels where they added much to them in their attempt to refute what the Gnostic Christians believed about "the Christ."

In Marcion, on the contrary, his public ministry commenced at Capernaum; [Marcion, 1. 1]; whence, [v.10], he came to Nazareth, and preached; and here, in the natural order, [v.13], he refers to the works done at Capernaum.

This accords with the Gospel of Matthew, which represents that Jesus did not commence preaching until after he had taken up his residence in Capernaum. [Matt. 4. 13 to 17.] Mark follows Luke.

Matthew and Marcion were probably from a common manuscript.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is represented as performing his first miracle in Cana of Galilee, after which he went down to Capernaum. [John 2. 11, 12.] This, therefore, is confirmatory of Marcion and that the writer of Luke again gets this wrong! No Holy Spirit here!

It is probable that in Luke, the manuscripts were put together out of their natural order, and that this disorder was followed in Mark. It was the opinion of Griesbach that the author of Mark had before him the whole of the present Gospel of Luke. Schleiermacher thinks he had some of the manuscripts which comprise the Gospel of Luke [ Schleiermacher on Luke, p.91].

At the same time, the fact that nearly every word of Marcion is in Luke, besides much additional matter, is strongly suggestive of the theory, that the author of Luke had before him, besides other material, the Gospel of Marcion entire. On the supposition that Marcion was last written, it is difficult to conceive why he should have excluded so large a part of the Gospel of Luke, especially as it is now conceded that it was not done for dogmatic purposes. On the other hand, if Luke was written last, the accumulations were in accordance with the spirit of the age, and the practice of the times. Besides, it was necessary to have a gospel different from that of Marcion, who was a heretic. There is no satisfactory evidence that Marcion had seen either of the canonical gospels, or had even heard of them.

The first two chapters of Luke were wanting in the gospels of the first century. Rome would later have to created a body for "the Christ" if Jesus was to be their incarnated and fleshly "Christ."

*Heb 10:5 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (KJV)*



There is a big problem with this if you look at the Hebrew from which this supposed quote is taken. Again we find forgery in the New Testament as Psm. 40:6-8 says nothing of the sort.

*6 ¶ (40:7) Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required.*

Greater lies have never been told as we have before us a prime example of Roman creative theology as they purposefully misquote the Psalms whereby incarnational theology to give "the Christ" a fleshly body is made out of a passage declaring how God had opened the ears of mankind in order for them to please Him through learning and living of the Torah and His Commandments.

The first two chapters of Luke were also wanting in the Gospel of the Hebrews, or Nazarenes, about A.D. 125, as well as in the Gospel of Marcion, A.D. 145. They first appeared in the the Gospel of Luke following Irenaeus' Second New Testament in 180 C.E.

**Answer for yourself:** Then is it not fair to say that early Church Fathers have misrepresented and deceitfully discredited Marcion's "Gospel of the Lord" and added much to the later "Gospel of Luke" and presented it to the world as if written by Luke when it was not?

**Answer for yourself:** What accounts in the Gospel of Luke are pure fabrications created on purpose to further the Roman agenda of changing the earliest concepts of "the Christ" which were symbolic, metaphoric, and allegorical into a "literal" interpretation as if "the Christ" was a human and that human was according to the Roman Gospel Jesus of Nazareth?

Again we must not get confused as God anoints His servants but such different levels of anointing must not cause us to fail to see the forgery presented before us whereby "the Christ" was make an exclusive human being when in fact we all possess "the Christ." Yeshua was used by God in tremendous ways and the Jewish Messiah was to have and possess "this Christ" as well but the understanding of this must not blind us to the exclusiveness imposed upon Jesus in the New Testament and the forgery of events that accompany such literary creationism for the theological agendas of Rome.

Let us now turn to examine what various scholars have to say about the Roman forgery of the First New Testament as we see what they have to say about the continual falsification of these documents down through



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# MARCION'S ATTEMPT TO SET ASIDE THE OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY BY THE ADOPTION OF THE PAULINE GOSPEL

Adolf Von Harnack, in his History of Dogma, vol. I (pp.266-281), translated by N. Buchanan. Published by Boston, Little (1901), gives us the following information concerning Marcion.

Marcion cannot be numbered among the Gnostics in the strict sense of the word. 1 For (1) he was not guided by any speculatively scientific, or even by an apologetic, but by a soteriological interest. 2 (2) He therefore put all emphasis on faith, not on Gnosis. 3 (3) In the exposition of his ideas he neither applied the elements of any Semitic religious wisdom, nor the methods of the Greek philosophy of religion. 4 (4) He never made the distinction between an esoteric and an exoteric form of religion. He rather clung to the publicity of the preaching, and endeavoured to reform Christendom, in opposition to the attempts at founding schools for those who knew and mystery cults for such as were in quest of initiation. It was only after the failure of his attempts at reform that he founded churches of his own, in which brotherly equality, freedom from all ceremonies, and strict evangelical discipline were to rule. 5 Completely carried away with the novelty, uniqueness and grandeur of the Pauline Gospel of the grace of God in Christ, Marcion felt that all other conceptions of the Gospel, and especially its union with the Old Testament religion, was opposed to, and a backsliding from' the truth. 6 He accordingly supposed that it was necessary to make the sharp antitheses of Paul, law and gospel, wrath and grace, works and faith, flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, death and life, that is the Pauline criticism of the Old Testament religion, the foundation of his religious views, and to refer them to two principles, the righteous and wrathful god of the Old Testament, who is at 'the same time identical with the creator of the world, and the God of the Gospel, quite unknown before Christ, who is only love and mercy. 7 This Paulinism in its religious strength, but without dialectic, without the Jewish Christian view of history, and detached from the soil of the Old Testament, was to him the true Christianity. Marcion, like Paul, felt that the religious' value of a statutory law with commandments and ceremonies, was very different from that of a uniform law of love. 8 Accordingly, he had a capacity for appreciating the Pauline idea of faith; it is to him reliance on the unmerited grace of God which is revealed in Christ. But Marcion shewed himself to be a Greek, influenced by the religious spirit of the time, by changing the ethical contrast of the good and legal into the contrast between the infinitely exalted spiritual and the sensible which is subject to the law of nature, by despairing of the triumph of good in the world and, consequently, correcting the traditional faith that the world and history belong to God, by an empirical view of the world and the course of events in it, 9 a view to which he was no doubt also led by the severity of the early Christian estimate of the world. Yet to him systematic speculation about the final causes of the contrast actually observed, was by no means the main thing. So far as he himself ventured on such a speculation he seems to have been influenced by the Syrian Cerdo. The numerous contradictions which arise as soon as one attempts to reduce Marcion's propositions to a system, and the fact that his disciples tried all possible conceptions of the doctrine of principles, and defined the relation of the two Gods very differently, are the clearest proof that Marcion was a religious character, that he had in general nothing to do with principles, but with living beings whose power he felt, and that what he ultimately saw in the Gospel was not an explanation of the world, but redemption from the world, 10--redemption from a world, which even in the best that it can offer, has nothing that can reach the height of the blessing bestowed in Christ. 11 Special attention may be called to the following particulars.



1. Marcion explained the Old Testament in its literal sense and rejected every allegorical interpretation. He recognised it as the revelation of the creator of the world and the god of the Jews, but placed it, just on that account, in sharpest contrast to the Gospel. He demonstrated the contradictions between the Old Testament and the Gospel in a voluminous work (the antithesis). 12 In the god of the former book he saw a being whose character was stern justice, and therefore anger, contentiousness and unmercifulness. The law which rules nature and man appeared to him to accord with the characteristics of this god and the kind of law revealed by him, and therefore it seemed credible to him that this god is the creator and lord of the world (kosmokratos). As the law which governs the world is inflexible, and yet, on the other hand, full of contradictions, just and again brutal, and as the law of the Old Testament exhibits the same features, so the god of creation was to Marcion a being who united in himself the whole gradations of attributes from justice to malevolence, from obstinacy to inconsistency. 13 Into this conception of the creator of the world, the characteristic of which is that it cannot be systematised, could easily be fitted the Syrian Gnostic theory which regards him as an evil being, because he belongs to this world and to matter. Marcion did not accept it in principle, 14 but touched it lightly and adopted certain inferences. 15 On the basis of the Old Testament and of empirical observation, Marcion divided men into two classes, good and evil, though he regarded them all, body and soul, as creatures of the demiurge. The good are those who strive to fulfil the law of the demiurge. These are outwardly better than those who refuse him obedience. But the distinction found here is not the decisive one. To yield to the promptings of Divine grace is the only decisive distinction, and those just men will shew themselves less susceptible to the manifestation of the truly good than sinners. As Marcion held the Old Testament to be a book worthy of belief, though his disciple, Apelles, thought otherwise, he referred all its predictions to a Messiah whom the creator of the world is yet to send; and who, as a warlike hero, is to set up the earthly kingdom of the "just" God. 16

2. Marcion placed the good God of love in opposition to the creator of the world. 17 This God has only been revealed in Christ. He was absolutely unknown before Christ, 18 and men were in every respect strange to him. 19 Out of pure goodness and mercy, for these are the essential attributes of this God who judges not and is not wrathful, he espoused the cause of those beings who were foreign to him, as he could not bear to have them any longer tormented by their just and yet malevolent lord. 20 The God of love appeared in Christ and proclaimed a new kingdom (Tertull., adv. Marc. III. 24. fin.). Christ called to himself the weary and heavy laden, 21 and proclaimed to them that he would deliver them from the fetters of their lord and from the world. He shewed mercy to all while he sojourned on the earth, and did in every respect the opposite of what the creator of the world had done to men. They who believed in the creator of the world nailed him to the cross. But in doing so they were unconsciously serving his purpose, for his death was the price by which the God of love purchased men from the creator of the world. 22 He who places his hope in the Crucified can now be sure of escaping from the power of the creator of the world, and of being translated into the kingdom of the good God. But experience shews that, like the Jews, men who are virtuous according to the law of the creator of the world, do not allow themselves to be converted by Christ; it is rather sinners who accept his message of redemption. Christ, therefore, rescued from the underworld, not the righteous men of the Old Testament (Iren. I. 27. 3), but the sinners who were disobedient to the creator of the world. If the determining thought of Marcion's view of Christianity is here again very clearly shewn, the Gnostic woof cannot fail to be seen in the proposition that the good God delivers only the souls, not the bodies of believers. The antithesis of spirit and matter, appears here as the decisive one, and the good God of love becomes the God of the spirit, the Old Testament god the god of the flesh. In point of fact, Marcion seems to have given such a turn to the good God's attributes of love, and incapability of wrath, as to make Him the apathetic, infinitely exalted Being, free from all affections. The contradiction in which Marcion is here involved is evident, because he taught expressly that the spirit of man is in itself just as foreign to the good God as his body. But the strict asceticism which Marcion demanded as a Christian, could have had no motive, without the Greek assumption of a metaphysical contrast of flesh and Spirit, which in fact was also apparently the doctrine of Paul.

3. The relation in which Marcion placed the two Gods, appears at first sight to be one of equal rank. 23 Marcion himself, according to the most reliable witnesses, expressly asserted that both were uncreated, eternal, etc. But if we look more closely we shall see that in Marcion's mind there can be no thought of equality. Not only did he himself expressly declare that the creator of the world is a self-contradictory being of limited knowledge and power, but the whole doctrine of redemption shews that he is a power subordinate to the good God. We need not stop to enquire about the details, but it is certain that the creator of the world formerly knew nothing of the existence of the good God, that he is in the end completely powerless against him, that he is overcome by him, and that history in its issue with regard to man, is determined solely by its relation to the good God. The just god appears at the end of history, not as an independent being, hostile to the good God, but as one subordinate to him, 24 so that some scholars, such as



Neander, have attempted to claim for Marcion a doctrine of one principle, and to deny that he ever held the complete independence of the creator of the world, the creator of the world being simply an angel of the good God. This inference may certainly be drawn with little trouble, as the result of various considerations, but it is forbidden by reliable testimony. The characteristic of Marcion's teaching is just this, that as soon as we seek to raise his ideas from the sphere of practical considerations to that of a consistent theory, we come upon a tangled knot of contradictions. The theoretic contradictions are explained by the different interests which here cross each other in Marcion. In the first place, he was consciously dependent on the Pauline theology, and was resolved to defend everything which he held to be Pauline. Secondly, he was influenced by the contrast in which he saw the ethical powers involved. This contrast seemed to demand a metaphysical basis, and its actual solution seemed to forbid such a foundation. Finally, the theories of Gnosticism, the paradoxes of Paul, the recognition of the duty of strictly mortifying the flesh, suggested to Marcion the idea that the good God was the exalted God of the spirit, and the just god the god of the sensuous, of the flesh. This view, which involved the principle of a metaphysical dualism, had something very specious about it, and to its influence we must probably ascribe the fact that Marcion no longer attempted to derive the creator of the world from the good God. His disciples who had theoretical interests in the matter, no doubt noted the contradictions. In order to remove them, some of these disciples advanced to a doctrine of three principles, the good God, the just creator, of the world, the evil god, by conceiving the creator of the world sometimes as an independent being, sometimes as one dependent on the good God. Others reverted to the common dualism, God of the spirit and god of matter. But Apelles, the most important of Marcion's disciples, returned to the creed of the one God (mik arke), and conceived the creator of the world and Satan as his angels, without departing from the fundamental thought of the master, but rather following suggestions which he himself had given. 25 Apart from Apelles, who founded a Church of his own, we hear nothing of the controversies of disciples breaking up the Marcionite church. All those who lived in the faith for which the master had worked-viz., that the laws ruling in nature and history, as well as the course of common legality and righteousness, are the antitheses of the act of Divine mercy in Christ, and that cordial love and believing confidence have their proper contrasts in self-righteous pride and the natural religion of the heart, -those who rejected the Old Testament and clung solely to the Gospel proclaimed by Paul, and finally, those who considered that a strict mortification of the flesh and an earnest renunciation of the world were demanded in the name of the Gospel, felt themselves members of the same community, and to all appearance allowed perfect liberty to speculations about final causes.

4. Marcion had no interest in specially emphasising the distinction between the good God and Christ, which according to the Pauline Epistles, could not be denied. To him Christ is the manifestation of the good God himself. 26 But Marcion taught that Christ assumed absolutely nothing from the creation of the Demiurge, but came down from heaven in the 15th year of the Emperor Tiberius, and after the assumption of an apparent body, began his preaching in the synagogue of Capernaum. 27 This pronounced docetism which denies that Jesus was born, or subjected to any human process of development, 28 is the strongest expression of Marcion's abhorrence of the world. This aversion may have sprung from the severe attitude of the early Christians toward the world, but the inference which Marcion here draws, shews, that this feeling was, in his case, united with the Greek estimate of spirit and matter. But Marcion's docetism is all the more remarkable that, under Paul's guidance, he put a high value on the fact of Christ's death upon the cross. Here also is a glaring contradiction which his later disciples laboured to remove. This much, however, is unmistakable, that Marcion succeeded in placing the greatness and uniqueness of redemption through Christ in the clearest light and in beholding this redemption in the person of Christ, but chiefly in his death upon the cross.

5. Marcion's eschatology is also quite rudimentary. Yet he assumed with Paul that violent attacks were yet in store for the Church of the good God on the part of the Jewish Christ of the future, the Antichrist. He does not seem to have taught a visible return of Christ, but, in spite of the omnipotence and goodness of God, he did teach a twofold issue of history. The idea of a deliverance of all men, which seems to follow from his doctrine of boundless grace, was quite foreign to him. For this very reason, he could not help actually making the good God the judge, though in theory he rejected the idea, in order not to measure the will and acts of God by a human standard. Along with the fundamental proposition of Marcion, that God should be conceived only as goodness and grace, we must take into account the strict asceticism which he prescribed for the Christian communities, in order to see that that idea of God was not obtained from antinomianism. We know of no Christian community in the second century which insisted so strictly on renunciation of the world as the Marcionites. No union of the sexes was permitted. Those who were married had to separate ere they could be received by baptism into the community. The sternest precepts were laid down in the matter of food and drink. Martyrdom was enjoined; and from the fact that they were "palaipwoi kai misoumenoi" in the



world, the members were to know that they were disciples of Christ. 29 With all that, the early Christian enthusiasm was wanting.

6. Marcion defined his position in theory and practice towards the prevailing form of Christianity, which, on the one hand, shewed throughout its connection with the Old Testament, and, on the other, left room for a secular ethical code, by assuming that it had been corrupted by Judaism, and therefore needed a reformation. 30 But he could not fail to note that this corruption was not of recent date, but belonged to the oldest tradition itself. The consciousness of this moved him to a historical criticism of the whole Christian tradition. 31

Marcion was the first Christian who undertook such a task. Those writings to which he owed his religious convictions, viz., the Pauline Epistles, furnished the basis for it. He found nothing in the rest of Christian literature that harmonised with the Gospel of Paul. But he found in the Pauline Epistles hints which explained to him this result of his observations. The twelve Apostles whom Christ chose did not understand him, but regarded him as the Messiah of the god of creation. 32 And therefore Christ inspired Paul by a special revelation, lest the Gospel of the grace of God should be lost through falsifications. 33 But even Paul had been understood only by few (by none?). His Gospel had also been misunderstood nay, his Epistles had been falsified in many passages, 34 in order to make them teach the identity of the god of creation and the God of redemption. A new reformation was therefore necessary. Marcion felt himself entrusted with this commission, and the church which he gathered recognised this vocation of his to be the reformer. 35 He did not appeal to a new revelation such as he presupposed for Paul. As the Pauline Epistles and an authentic "evangelion of the Lord" were in existence, it was only necessary to purify these from interpolations, and restore the genuine Paulinism which was just the Gospel itself. But it was also necessary to secure and preserve this true Christianity for the future. Marcion, in all probability, was the first to conceive and, in great measure, to realise the idea of placing Christendom on the firm foundation of a definite theory of what is Christian- but not of basing it on a theological doctrine- and of establishing this theory by a fixed collection of Christian writings with canonical authority. 36 He was not a systematic thinker; but he was more, for he was not only a religious character, but at the same time a man with an organising talent, such as has no peer in the early Church. If we think of the lofty demands he made on Christians, and, on the other hand, ponder the results that accompanied his activity, we cannot fail to wonder. Wherever Christians were numerous about the year 160, there must have been Marcionite communities with the same fixed but free organisation, with the same canon and the same conception of the essence of Christianity, pre-eminent for the strictness of their morals and their joy in martyrdom. 37 The Catholic Church was then only in process of growth, and it was long ere it reached the solidity won by the Marcionite church through the activity of one man, who was animated by a faith so strong that he was able to oppose his conception of Christianity to all others as the only right one, and who did not shrink from making selections from tradition instead of explaining it away. He was the first who laid the firm foundation for establishing what is Christian, because, in view of the absoluteness of his faith, 38 he had no desire to appeal either to a secret evangelic tradition, or to prophecy, or to natural religion.

1 He belonged to Pontus and was a rich shipowner: about 139 he came to Rome, already a Christian, and for a short time belonged to the church there. As he could not succeed in his attempt to reform it, he broke away from it about 144. He founded a church of his own and developed a very great activity. He spread his views by numerous journeys, and communities bearing his name very soon arose in every province of the Empire (Adamantius, *de recta in deum fide*, Origen, 9pp. ed. Delarue I. p. 809: Epiph. h. 42. p. 668. ed. Oehler). They were ecclesiastically organised (Tertull, *de praescr.* 41, and *adv. Marc* IV.5) and possessed bishops, presbyters. etc. (Euseb., H. E. IV. 15. 46: *de Mart. Palaest.* X. 2: Les Bas and Waddington, *Inscript. Grecq. et Latines rec. en Graece et en Asie Mm.* Vol. III. No. 2558). Justin (*Apol.* 1. 26) about 150 tells us that Marcion's preaching had spread "*kata pan genos anthropon*" and by the year 155, the Marcionites were already numerous in Rome (Iren. III. 34). Up to his death, however, Marcion did not give up the purpose of winning the whole of

Christendom, and therefore again and again sought connection with it (Iren. I. c.; Tertull., de praescr. 30), likewise his disciples (see the conversation of Apelles with Rhodon in Euseb., H E. V. 13. 5, and the dialogue of the Marcionites with Adamantius). It is very probable that Marcion had fixed the ground features of his doctrine, and had laboured for its propagation, even before he came to Rome. In Rome the Syrian Gnostic Cerdo had a great influence on him, so that we can even yet perceive, and clearly distinguish, the Gnostic element in the form of the Marcionite doctrine transmitted to us.

2 "Sufficit", said the Marcionites, "unicum opus deo nostro, quod hominem liberavit summa et praecipua bonitate sua". (Tertull., adv. Marc. 1.17).

3 S Apelles, the disciple of Marcion, declared (Euseb., II. E. V.) "sothnsesthai tous epi tou estauromenon elpixotas, mono exa en ergois agathios euriskwntai".

4 This is an extremely important point. Marcion rejected all allegories. (See Tertull., adv. Marc. II. 19. 21. 22:

111. 5. 6. 14 19: IV. 15. 20: V. I; Orig., Comment. in Matth. T. XV. 3 Opp. III. p.655: in. ep. ad. Rom. Opp.

IV. p.494 sq.: Adamant., Sect. I, Orig. Opp. I. pp. 808. 817; Ephr.Syrus., hymn. 36 Edit. Benedict, p.520 sq.)

and describes this method as an arbitrary one. But that simply means that he perceived and avoided the transformation of the Gospel into Hellenic philosophy. No philosophic formulas are found in any of his statements that have been handed down to us. But what is still more important, none of his early opponents have attributed to Marcion a system, as they did to Basilides and Valentinus. There can be no doubt that Marcion did not set up any system (the Armenian, Esnik, first gives a Marcionite system, but that is a late production. see my essay in the Ztschr. f. wiss. Theol. 1896. p. 50 f.). He was just as far from having any apologetic or rationalistic interest. Justin (Apol. I. 58) says of the Marcionites ; " apodeizin undemian peri wn legousin exousin, alla alogws ws upo luxon arves sunhrpasmenoi ktl" . Tertullian again and again casts in the teeth of Marcion that he has adduced no proof.

See I. ii sq.: III. 2.3.4: IV.11: "Subito Christus, subito et Johannes sic sunt omnia apud Marcionem, quae suum et plenum habent ordinem apud creatorem". Rhodon (Euseb., H.E. V.13.4) says of two prominent genuine disciples of Marcion: ~"un eurioxontes ths diaresin twn pragmatewn, ws oude ekeinos duo arxas apephenanto psilws kai anapodeiktws".

Of Apelles, the most important of Marcion's disciples, who laid aside the Gnostic borrows of his master, we have the words (1.c.):un dein olws exetazein ton logon, all ekaston ws pepisteuxe, diamenein Ewthesesthai gar tous eti ton estarwmenon elpikontas apephaineto. nomon ean en ergois agathois euriskwntai...to de pws esti mia arxe. un ginwskein elegen, outw de kineisthai monon...un epistasthai tws eis estin agennetos theos,



touto de pisteuein". It was Marcion's purpose therefore to give all value to faith alone, to make it dependent on its own convincing power, and avoid all philosophic paraphrase and argument. The contrast in which he placed the Christian blessing of salvation, has in principle nothing in common with the contract in which Greek philosophy viewed the summum bonum. Finally, it may be pointed out that Marcion introduced no new elements (Aeons, Matter, etc.) into his evagelic views, and leant on no Oriental religious science, The later Marcionite speculations about matter (see the account of Esnik) should not be charged upon the master himself, as is manifest from the second book of Tertullian against Marcion. The assumption that the creator of the world created it out of materia subjacens, is certainly found in Marcion (see Tertull., I.15; Hippol., Philos. X. 19); but he speculated no further about it, and that assumption itself was not rejected, for example, by Clem. Alex. (Strom. 11.16.74: Photius on Clement's Rypotyposes). Marcion did not really speculate even about the good God; yet see Tertull., adv. Marc. I. 14.15: IV. 7: "Mundus ille superior"- "coelum tertium".

5 Tertull., de praescr. 41. sq.; the delineation refers chiefly to the Marcionites (see Epiph. h. 42. c. 3.4, and Esnik's account), on the Church system of Marcion, see also Tertull., adv. Marc. I. 14,21, 23,24,28,29:111.1,22: IV. 5,34:V.7, 10,15,18.

6 Marcion himself originally belonged to the main body of the Church, as is expressly declared by Tertullian and Epiphanius, and attested by one of his own letters.

7 3 Tertull., adv. Marc. I. 2, 19: "Separatio legis et evangelil proprium et principale opus est Marcionis . . . ex diversitate sententiarum utriusque instrumenti diversitatem quoque argumentatur deorum". 11.28, 29: IV.

1.1.6:"dispare deos, alterum, judicem, ferum, bellipotentem ; alterum mitem, placidum et tantummodo bonum atque optimum." Iren. 1.27.2.

8 Marcion maintained that,the good God is not to be feared. Tertull., adv. Marc. 1.27: "Atque adeo pras se ferunt Marcionitas quod deum suum omnino non timeant. Malus autem, inquiunt, timebitur; bonus autem diligitur." To the question why they did not sin if they did not fear their God, the Marcionites answered in the words of Rom. VI. I 2. (1. C).

9 Tertull., adv. Marc. I. 2 :11. 5.

10 See the passage adduced, p. 266, note 2, and Tertull, I. 19: "Immo inquiunt Marcionitas, deus noster, etsi non ab initio, etsi non per conditionem, sed per semetipsum revelatus est in Christi Jesu". The very fact that different theological tendencies (schools) appeared within Marcionite Christianity and were mutually tolerant, proves that the Marcionite Church itself was not based on a formulated system of faith. Apelles expressly conceded different

forms of doctrine in Christendom, on the basis of faith in the Crucified and a common holy ideal of life (see p.267).

11 Tertull., I, 13. "Narem contrahentes impudentissimi Marcionitas convertuntur ad destructionem operum creatoris. Nimirum, inquit, grande opus et dignum deo mundus"? The Marcionites (Iren., IV. 34. i) put the question to their ecclesiastical opponents, "Quid novi attulit dominus veniens?" and therewith caused them no small embarrassment.

12 On these see Tertull I. 19:11. 28. 29: IV. I, 4, 6: Epiph.; Hippol., Philos. VII. 30; the book was used by other Gnostics also (it is very probable that I Tim. VI. 20 an addition to the Epistle -refers to Marcion's Antitheses). Apelles, Marcion's disciple, composed a similar work under the title of "Syllogismi". Marcion's Antitheses, which may still in part be reconstructed from Tertullian, Epiphanius, Adamantius, Ephraem, etc., possessed canonical authority in the Marcionite church, and therefore took the place of the Old Testament. That is quite clear from Tertull., I. 19 (cf. IV. I): Separatio legis et Evangelii proprium et principale opus est Marcionis, nec poterunt negare discipuli ejus, quod in summo (suo) instrumento habent, quo denique initiantur et indurantur in hanc hasresim.

13 Tertullian has frequently pointed to the contradictions in the Marcionite conception of the god of creation. These contradictions, however, vanish as soon as we regard Marcion's god from the point of view that he is like his revelation in the Old Testament.

14 The creator of the world is indeed to Marcion "malignus", but not "malus".

15 Marcion touched on it when he taught that the "visibilia" belonged to the god of creation, but the "invisibilia" to the good God (I. i6). He adopted the consequences, inasmuch as he taught docetically about Christ, and only assumed a deliverance of the human soul.

16 See especially the third book of Tertull., adv. Marcion.

17 "Solius bonitatis", "deus melior", were Marcion's standing expressions for him.

18 'Deus incognitus' was likewise a standing expression. They maintained against all attacks the religious position that, from the nature of the case, believers only can know God, and that this is quite sufficient (Tertull. I.11).

19 Marcion firmly emphasised this and appealed to passages in Paul; see Tertull., I. 11,19, 23: "scio dicturos, atquin hanc esse principalem et perfectam bonitatem, cum sine ullo debito familiaritatis in extraneos voluntaria et libera effunditur, secundum quam inimicos quoque nostros et hoc nomine jam extraneos deligere jubeamur". The



Church Fathers therefore declared that Marcion's good God was a thief and a robber. See also Celsus, in Orig. VI. 53.

20 See Esnik's account, which, however, is to be used cautiously.

21 Marcion has strongly emphasised the respective passages in Luke's Gospel: see his Antitheses, and his comments on the Gospel, as presented by Tertullian (I. IV).

22 That can be plainly read in Esnik, and must have been thought by Marcion himself, as he followed Paul (see Tertull., I. V. and I.11). Apelles also emphasised the death upon the cross. Marcion's conception of the purchase can indeed no longer be ascertained in its details. But see Adamant., de recta in deum fide, sect. I. It is one of his theoretic contradictions that the good God who is exalted above righteousness should yet purchase men.

23 Tertull. 1.6: "Marcion non negat creatorem deum esse.

24 Here Tertull., I. 27, 28, is of special importance; see also 11.28: IV.29 (on Luke XII. 41-46): IV. 30.

Marcion's idea was this. The good God does not judge or punish; but He judges in so far as he keeps evil at a distance from Him: it remains foreign to Him. "Marcionitas interrogati quid fiet peccatori cuique die jib? respondent abici ilium quasi ah oculis". "Tranquilitas est et mansuetudinis segregare solummodo et partem ejus cum infidelibus ponere". But what is the end of him who is thus rejected? "Ab igne, inquit, creatoris deprehendetur". We might think with Tertullian that the creator of the world would receive sinners with joy: but this is the god of the law who punishes sinners. The issue is twofold: the heaven of the good God, and the hell of the creator of the world. Either Marcion assumed with Paul that no one can keep the law, or he was silent about the end of the "righteous" because he had no interest in it. At any rate, the teaching of Marcion closes with an outlook in which the creator of the world can no longer be regarded as an independent god. Marcion's disciples (see Esnik) here developed a consistent theory: the creator of the world violated his own law by killing the righteous Christ, and was therefore deprived of all his power by Christ.

25 Schools soon arose in the Marcionite church, just as they did later on in the main body of Christendom see Rhodon in Eusel) ,II. E. V '3.2-4). The different doctrines of principles which were here developed (two, three, four principles; the Marcionite Marcus's doctrine of two principles in which the creator of the world is an evil being, diverges furthest from the Master), explain the different accounts of the Church Fathers about Marcion's teaching. The only one of the disciples who really seceded from the Master, was Apelles (Tertull., de praescr. 30). His teaching is therefore the more important, as it shews that it was possible to retain the fundamental ideas of Marcion without embracing dualism. The attitude of Apelles to the Old Testament is that of Marcion, in so far as

he rejects the book. But perhaps he somewhat modified the strictness of the Master. On the other hand, he certainly designated much in it as untrue and fabulous. It is remarkable that we meet with a highly honoured prophetess in the environment of Apelles: in Marcion's church we hear nothing of such, nay, it is extremely important as regards Marcion, that he has never appealed to the Spirit and to prophets. The "sanctiores feminas" Tertull. V.8, are not of this nature, nor can we appeal even to V.15. Moreover, it is hardly likely that Jerome ad Eph. III. 5, refers to Marcionites. In this complete disregard of early Christian prophecy, and in his exclusive reliance on literary documents, we see in Marcion a process of despiritualising, that is, a form of secularisation peculiar to himself. Marcion no longer possessed the early Christian enthusiasm as, for example, Hermas did. 26 Marcion was fond of calling Christ "Spiritus salutaris". From the treatise of Tertullian we can prove both that Marcion distinguished Christ from God, and that he made no distinction (see, for example, I. 11, 14: II.27: 111. 8, 9, 11: IV 7). Here again Marcion did not think theologically. What he regarded as specially important was that God has revealed himself in Christ, "per semetipsum" Later Marcionites expressly taught Patripassianism, and have on that account been often grouped with the Sabellians. But other Christologies also arose in Marcion's church, which is again a proof that it was not dependent on scholastic teaching, and therefore could take part in the later development of doctrines.

27 See the beginning of the Marcionite Gospel.

28 Tertullian informs us sufficiently about this. The body of Christ was regarded by Marcion merely as an "umbra", a "phantasma" His disciples adhered to this, but Apelles first constructed a "doctrine" of the body of Christ.

29 The strict asceticism of Marcion and the Marcionites is reluctantly acknowledged by the Church Fathers; see Tertull., de praescr. 30: "Sanctissimus magister"; I. 28, "carni imponit sanctitem". The strict prohibition of marriage: I. 29: IV. II, 17, 29, 34, 38: V. 7, 8, 15, 18; prohibition of food: I. 14 cynical life: Hippol., Philos. VII. 29; numerous martyrs: Euseb, H. E. V. 16. 21, and frequently elsewhere. Marcion named his adherents (Tertull. IV. 9 36) "suntalaipwroi kai summisoumenoi". It is questionable whether Marcion himself allowed the repetition of baptism; it arose in his church. But this repetition is a proof that the prevailing conception of baptism was not sufficient for a vigorous religious temper.

30 Tertull. 1.20. "Aiunt, Marcionem non tam innovasse regulam separatione leg is et evangelii quam retro adulteratam recurasse"; See the account of Epiphanius, taken from Hippolytus, about the appearance of Marcion



in Rome (h. 42. I. 2).

31 Here again we must remember that Marcion appealed neither to a secret tradition, nor to the "Spirit", in order to appreciate the epochmaking nature of his undertaking.

32 In his estimate of the twelve Apostles Marcion took as his stand-point Gal. II. See Tertull. I. 20: IV. 3 (generally IV. i-6). V. 3; de praescr. 22.23. He endeavoured to prove from this chapter that from a misunderstanding of the words of Christ, the twelve Apostles had proclaimed a different Gospel than that of Paul; they had wrongly taken the Father of Jesus Christ for the god of creation. It is not quite clear how Marcion conceived the inward condition of the Apostles during the lifetime of Jesus (See Tertull. III. 22: IV. 3. 39). He assumed that they were persecuted by the Jews as the preachers of a new God. It is probable, therefore, that he thought of a gradual obscuring of the preaching of Jesus in the case of the primitive Apostles. They fell back into Judaism; see Iren. III. 2.2. "Apostolos admiscuisse ea quae sunt legalia salvatoris verbis"; 111.12.12: "Apostoli quas sunt judaeorum sentientes scripserunt" etc.; Tertull V.3: "Apostolos vultis Judaismi magis adfines subintelligi." The expositions of Marcion in Tertull. IV. 9, 11,13,21,24,39: V.13 shew that he regarded the primitive Apostles as out and out real Apostles of Christ.

33 The call of Paul was viewed by Marcion as a manifestation of Christ, of equal value with His first appearance and ministry; see the account of Esnik. "Then for the second time Jesus came down to the lord of the creatures in the form of his Godhead, and entered into judgment with him on account of his death.... And Jesus said to him: 'Judgment is between me and thee, let no one be judge but thine own laws.... hast thou not written in this thy law, that he who killeth shall die?' And he answered, 'I have so written' . . . Jesus said to him, 'Deliver thyself therefore into my hands'... The creator of the world said, 'Because I have slain thee I give thee a compensation; all those who shall believe on thee, that thou mayest do with them what thou pleasest.' Then Jesus left him and carried away Paul, and shewed him the price, and sent him to preach that we are bought with this price, and that all who believe in Jesus are sold by this just god to the good one." This is a most instructive account; for it shews that in the Marcionite schools the Pauline doctrine of reconciliation was transformed into a drama, and placed between the death of Christ and the call of Paul, and that the Pauline Gospel was based, not directly on the death of Christ upon the cross, but on a theory of it converted into history. On Paul as the one apostle of the truth; see Tertull. 1 20:111. 5, 14 : IV. 2 sq.: IV. 34: V. I. As to a Marcionite theory that the promise to send the Spirit was fulfilled in the mission of Paul, an indication of the want of enthusiasm among the Marcionites, see the following page, note 2.

34 Marcion must have spoken ex professo in his Antitheses about the Judaistic corruptions of Paul's Epistles and

the Gospel. He must also have known Evangelic writings bearing the names of the original Apostles, and have expressed himself about them (Tertull. IV. 1-6).

35 Marcion's self-consciousness of being a reformer, and the recognition of this in his church is still not understood, although his undertaking itself and the facts speak loud enough. (1) The great Marcionite church called itself after Marcion (Adamant., de recta in deum fide. 1.809 ; Epiph. h.42, p. 668, ed. Oehler: "Markion sonoma epikeklentai oi upo tou epatemenoi ws seauton keruxantos kai ouxi kriston". We possess a Marcionite inscription which begins: "sunagwge Markiwnistwn". As the Marcionites did not form a school, but a church, it is of the greatest value for shewing the estimate of the master in this church, that its members called themselves by his name. (2) The Antitheses of Marcion had a place in the Marcionite canon (see above, p 270). This canon therefore embraced a book of Christ, Epistles of Paul, and a book of Marcion, and for that reason the Antitheses were always circulated with the canon of Marcion. (3) Origen (in Luc. hom. 25. T. III. p 962) reports as follows: "Denique in tantam quidam dilectionis audaciam proruperunt, ut nova quasdam et inaudita super Paulo monstra confingerent. Alli enim aiunt, hoc quod scriptum est, sedere a dextris salvatoris et sinistris, de Paulo et de Marcione dici, quod Paulus sedet a dextris, Marcion sedet a sinistris. Porro ahi legentes: Mittam vobis advocatum Spiritum veritatis, nolunt intelligere tertiam personam a patre et fiho, sed Apostolum Paulum." The estimate of Marcion which appears here is exceedingly instructive. (4) An Arabian writer, who, it is true, belongs to a later period, reports that Marcionites called their founder "Apostolorum principem." (5) Justin, the first opponent of Marcion, classed him with Simon Magus and Menander, that is, with demonic founders of religion. These testimonies may suffice.

36 On Marcion's Gospel see the Introductions to the New Testament and Zahn's Kanonsgeschichte, Bd. I., p.585 if. and II., p.409. Marcion attached no name to his Gospel, which, according to his own testimony, he produced from the third one of our Canon ~Tertull, adv. Marc. IV. 2. 3. 4). He called it simply Euaggelion (kuriou), but held that it was the Gospel which Paul had in his mind when he spoke of his Gospel. The later Marcionites ascribed the authorship of the Gospel partly to Paul, partly to Christ himself, and made further changes in it. That Marcion chose the Gospel called after Luke should be regarded as a makeshift; for this Gospel, which is undoubtedly the most Hellenistic of the four Canonical Gospels, and therefore comes nearest to the Catholic conception of Christianity, accommodated itself in its traditional form but little better than the other three to Marcionite Christianity. Whether Marcion took it for a basis because in his time it had already been



connected with Paul (or really had a connection with Paul), or whether the numerous narratives about Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, led him to recognise in this Gospel alone a genuine kernel, we do not know.

37 The associations of the Encratites and the community founded by Apelles stood between the main body of Christendom and the Marcionite church. The description of Celsus (especially V. 61 - 64 in Orig.) shews the motley appearance which Christendom presented soon after the middle of the second century. It there mentions the Marcionites, and a little before (V. 59), the "great Church." It is very important that Celsus makes the main distinction consist in this, that some regarded their God as identical with the God of the Jews, whilst others again declared that "theirs was a different Deity who is hostile to that of the Jews, and that it was he who had sent the Son." (V.61).

38 One might be tempted to comprise the character of Marcion's religion in the words, "The God who dwells in my breast can profoundly excite my inmost being. He who is throned above all my powers can move nothing outwardly." But Marcion had the firm assurance that God has done something much greater than move the world: he has redeemed men from the world, and given them the assurance of this redemption, in the midst of all oppression and enmity which do not cease.



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## JUSTIN MARTYR "ON MARCION"...THE CHURCH FATHERS SPEAK...SHOULD WE BELIEVE HIM?

We saw in an earlier article that relatively little is known about Marcion (160 C.E.) because heterodoxy (his brand of Christianity) was put down and his works were destroyed, or lost, or both. What is known of his life, writings and theology are found, or founded upon, the works of his enemies:

- **Justin Martyr (110-165)**
- **Irenaeus (120-202),**
- **Epiphanius (ca. 315-403) and especially**
- **Tertullian (145-220)**

### JUSTIN MARTYR...110-165 C.E.

Justin Martyr, the most famous Christian apologist of the 2nd century, left us many writings. As other apologists of his times (Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch & Minucius Felix), Justin was initially a Hellenistic philosopher who got converted late to Christianity. What is important to understand is that only Justin Martyr lived in the time when Marcion lived and collected the Pauline writings and a "Q" based gospel which comprised the First New Testament. All of these other detractors lives much longer after Marcion; some a half a century or a full century later. Likewise let us remember that since we have no existing writings by Marcion and have to rely on the vengeful writings of his later opponents then historical accuracy and honesty is seriously questioned and in doubt when reading these above "Church Fathers".

**Justin Martyr made the earliest known contemporary reference to Marcion** in his Apology. Justin wrote,

*And there is Marcion a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, called Christians* (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 26, in Apostolic Fathers (AF), vol. 1, edited by Cleveland A. Coxe (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 171).

**Justin Martyr is also very important for he is the first "major" writer about "the historical Jesus".**

In their search for the historical Jesus, the early Church historians even give evidences for the virgin birth. Justin Martyr, who lived around 150 A.D., recorded that if anyone questioned the virgin birth of Jesus, they should go and refer to the official archives Augustus Caesar.

Justin Martyr, wrote these words around 150 C.E.:

*"The Lord Jesus Christ our instructor, who was the first born of God the Father, was not born through sexual relations . . . God's power came upon the virgin, lighting upon her while she was still*



*a virgin, causing her to conceive . . . By the will of God, his Son, Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary."*

Justin give momentum to the rise of belief in a "fleshly Christ" and a "historical Jesus" but such phrases in his writings.

Many Christian scholar propose and teach that Justin was familiar in his day with the Gospels of Matthew and Gospels of Luke and likely was the first one to call those books "gospels".

**Answer for yourself:** But are these scholars right? Did Justin know of these two Gospels in his day? Did they exist? If so why would Marcion not use other parts of Luke that would suit quite well his "theology" had they existed?

Justin will write: 1Apology LXVI

*"For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them;*

Surprisingly what follows in Justin's writings following the above quote is not from the Gospels which we are familiar with today but rather from the Pauline epistles; in particular from 1 Cor:24-25a!

It seems Justin was quoting from memory and got confused between Paul's rendition and the one of the oral traditions concerning Jesus common in his day. This group of oral traditions ascribed to Jesus are reconstructed pre-Christian Gospel sayings which are believed by many to have been written much earlier than the four New Testament gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John). If this theory is correct, then Q is an extremely important piece of literature. It may contain the earliest descriptions of beliefs, behaviors and expectations of one group of Jesus' followers and was used by Justin and others in their writings as the "good news". Christians have realized for centuries that the Gospels Luke and Matthew have many points of similarity. But it was not until 150 years ago that they started to examine these correspondences in detail. It is important to realize that verses from the synoptic gospels are not merely similar. One would expect that three different authors' writings would be similar. It would not matter whether they were eye-witnesses to Jesus ministry (as religious conservatives believe) or whether they wrote many decades after Jesus' execution and based their writing on common oral traditions. But the correspondences go further than that. In hundreds of cases, the wording is identical, not merely similar.

**Answer for yourself:** In the absence of just one quote from any Christian writer naming either of the now known Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) until 180 C.E. or later, this is it highly likely that Justin's references to "gospels" and "memoirs of the apostles" are references to a loose body of oral and sparsely written teachings attributed to Jesus which scholars today call the "Q Gospel"? It sure is!

**Answer for yourself:** Could Justin, in referring to the word "gospel" or "good new" have been referring to Isa 41:27 27 and not an existing corpus of literature which we are familiar with today entitled the "Four Gospels"? He sure could and most likely was.

*The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings (the good news) (KJV)*

You will have to figure that out as you look at the evidence. When cornered with these problems and the lack of unforged historical evidence concerning the accurate dating of these Four Gospels Scholars have proposed Justin was quoting from a harmony, but this is not proven.

We find Justin saying:

*"that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this*

*is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone" (Justin, Apology LXVI)*

**Answer for yourself:** Do we find the words "and given thanks", "This is my blood", and "gave it to them" in the Gospel accounts of the last supper? No. We find them in Paul and not the Gospels.

*1 Cor 11:24-25 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** How is this verse written in Luke?

*Luke 22:20 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** How is this verse different from what Justin records? Absent from the "supposed" quote of Justin is any reference to:

- the broken body of Jesus symbolized in the bread which is broken
- the remembrance of Jesus in the sacrament which is to be repeated
- the New Testament

**Answer for yourself:** What should this teach us?

The wording in the list above are not found in the Gospel of Luke but only in the authentic Pauline epistles which comprised the First New Testament of Marcion. It would appear that Justin is taking liberty with the texts and seems to be drawing from Paul instead of any previously existing Gospel in his day.

Justin greatly preferred to call these writings 'memoirs' (13 times in 'Trypho'!) rather than 'gospels'.

**As examples:**

- 1Apology LXVII "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits;"
- Trypho CV "For when Christ was giving up His spirit on the cross, He said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,' [Lk23:46] as I have learned also from the memoirs."
- Trypho CIII "For in the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them,

Justin quoted a fair amount of material that one might suppose is found in the Four Gospels but he quotes it inaccurately and without naming his sources; something strange if a quote.

Not only that Justin introduces his quotes of supposed "Gospel Sayings" as follows:

- "His word being",
- "He taught us",
- "He said",
- "He thus persuaded us", etc, or, at best, as shown already, from the "memoirs"



Here is an example:

*1Apology XV "Concerning chastity, He uttered such sentiments as these: "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart before God." And, "If thy right eye offend thee, cut it out; for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire.""*

Let's compare it with:

*Mt5:28-29 "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."*

Justin is writing in the 3rd person; again strange if from a supposed eye-witness account like an Apostolic Gospel.

Justin was also inaccurate in quoting the O.T. Justin introduced many O.T. quotes as coming from the "Spirit of Prophecy", often with no other identification. But most of the argumentation is based on Old Testament texts, including many psalms, often quoted out-of-context, to "prove" that Christ's existence & crucifixion have been predicted. Also, Greek mythology and philosophers, such as Plato (a favorite of Justin), are extensively referred to.

If one is looking at all the evidence and chooses to read Justin for himself concerning his views of Marcion then one is hard pressed to believe that Justin has in his possession real Gospel accounts from the Four Apostles from which he drew. Not only that but in the absence of existing Gospels in his day which we are taught supposedly existed with genealogies, birth narratives, and infancy narratives it would seem that Justin is one of the first to interpret and teach "the Christ" as a historical person. Prior to Justin and his prolific writing we find only a slight reference to a possible historical Jesus in the works of Polycarp and Ignatius. The Epistle of Polycarp laments that "the great majority" of Christians embrace the idea of Jesus not existing in the flesh."

When all the evidence is evaluated, Gnosticism studied thoroughly and understood, manuscripts compared for scribal changes and integrity in transmission, comparative religions for allegorical understandings of God and mediation, then it become very clear that Justin is making a radical departure in the absence of existing Gospel traditions in teaching a historical Jesus.



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# INCRIMINATING TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR CONCERNING THE CHRIST MYTH

In his First Apology, Christian father Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) acknowledged the similarities between the older Pagan gods and religions and those of Christianity, when he attempted to demonstrate, in the face of ridicule, that Christianity was no more ridiculous than the earlier myths:

*"ANALOGIES TO THE HISTORY OF CHRIST. And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter. For you know how many sons your esteemed writers ascribed to Jupiter: Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Aesculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus. For what shall I say of Ariadne, and those who, like her, have been declared to be set among the stars? And what of the emperors who die among yourselves, whom you deem worthy of deification, and in whose behalf you produce some one who swears he has seen the burning Caesar rise to heaven from the funeral pyre?"*

In his endless apologizing, Justin reiterates the similarities between his godman and the gods of other cultures:

*"As to the objection of our Jesus's being crucified, I say, that suffering was common to all the aforementioned sons of Jove [Jupiter] . . . As to his being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that. As to his curing the lame, and the paralytic, and such as were cripples from birth, this is little more than what you say of your Aesculapius."*

In making these comparisons between Christianity and its predecessor Paganism, however, Martyr sinisterly spluttered:

*"It having reached the Devil's ears that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ, the Son of God, he set the heathen Poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same characters the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove."*

In his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Martyr again admits the pre-existence of the Christian tale and then uses his standard, irrational and self-serving apology, i.e., "the devil got there first":



*"Be well assured, then, Trypho, that I am established in the knowledge of and faith in the Scriptures by those counterfeits which he who is called the devil is said to have performed among the Greeks; just as some were wrought by the Magi in Egypt, and others by the false prophets in Elijah's days. For when they tell that Bacchus, son of Jupiter, was begotten by [Jupiter's] intercourse with Semele, and that he was the discoverer of the vine; and when they relate, that being torn in pieces, and having died, he rose again, and ascended to heaven; and when they introduce wine into his mysteries, do I not perceive that [the devil] has imitated the prophecy announced by the patriarch Jacob, and recorded by Moses? And when they tell that Hercules was strong, and travelled over all the world, and was begotten by Jove of Alcmene, and ascended to heaven when he died, do I not perceive that the Scripture which speaks of Christ, "strong as a giant to run his race," has been in like manner imitated? And when he [the devil] brings forward Aesculapius as the raiser of the dead and healer of all diseases, may I not say that in this matter likewise he has imitated the prophecies about Christ? . . . And when I hear, Trypho, that Perseus was begotten of a virgin, I understand that the deceiving serpent counterfeited also this."*



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# TERTULIAN...."ON MARCION"...THE CHURCH FATHERS SPEAK...SHOULD WE BELIEVE HIM?

**Answer for yourself:** Was Marcion really a "heretic" or is it just possible that he, in his first New Testament, expressed the more authentic ideas of "the Christ" which were held by the earliest Christians?

Well if you have made it this far into our website on Marcion and the First New Testament then by now you are having serious doubts if Marcion really was a "heretic" after all. More than likely by now having come to understand the continued falsification and forgery of the New Testament by proto-Catholics as well as later Catholic monks along with newly acquired knowledge of Gnosticism, mysticism, the Logos and the Sophia, and a new understanding of Paul as a Gnostic, then you are now in a position to judge for yourself if what we have been handed down throughout history from the Early Church Fathers branding Marcion as a "heretic" is really truthful or not.

**Answer for yourself:** What was Marcion's contribution to Christianity, especially to the New Testament Canon?

**Many scholars have been more truthful concerning Marcion than the Early Church Fathers whose writings are full of hatred for this man. No greater example could be found than that of Tertullian.**

- Casper Rene Gregory called Marcion "in every way the most active and influential man, bearing the name of Christian, between Paul and Origen" (Casper Rene Gregory, Canon and Text of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 81.
- Walter Bauer found in Marcion himself, "the first systematic collector of Paul's literary remains" (Walter Bauer, in Appendix II of John Knox, Marcion and the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 172).
- John Knox (1942) suggested that Luke-Acts may have been written in the late second century to replace or counteract Marcion's Luke (Knox, Marcion, 114-139).
- Floyd Filson wrote, "Of all the events that hastened the formation of the New Testament canon, none was so influential as the action of Marcion. We need not go so far as to say that Marcion created the idea of a New Testament canon, but his influence was certainly great" (Floyd V. Filson, Which Books Belong in the Bible? (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), p. 113).

## DISCOVERING THE TRUTH CONCERNING MARION'S LIFE, HIS WORKS, AND HIS THEOLOGY...THE CHURCH FATHERS HAVE THEIR SAY

Relatively little is known about Marcion (160 C.E.) because heterodoxy (his brand of Christianity) was put down and his works were destroyed, or lost, or both. What is known of his life, writings and theology are found, or founded upon, the works of his enemies:

- [Justin Martyr \(110-165\)](#),
- [Irenaeus \(120-202\)](#),



- Epiphanius (ca. 315-403) and especially**
- **Tertullian (145-220)**

What is important to understand is that only Justin Martyr lived in the time when Marcion lived and collected the Pauline writings and a "Q" based gospel which comprised the First New Testament. All of these other detractors lives much longer after Marcion; some a half a century or a full century later. Likewise let us remember that since we have no existing writings by Marcion and have to rely on the vengeful writings of his later opponents then historical accuracy and honesty is seriously questioned and in doubt when reading these above "Church Fathers".

**Tertullian named Marcion with other Gnostics**, whom he regarded among the pagan philosophers, when he wrote the famous line, *"What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? what between heretics and Christians?"* (Tertullian, On Prescriptions Against Heretics, 7, in Ante-Nicene Fathers (ANF), vol. 3, edited by Cleveland A. Coxe (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p.246). **You should find this quote rather amazing in light of the fact that Tertullian will later renounce his Christianity and return to Gnosticism at the end of his life.**

Tertullian, at the end of his life, will leave Christianity and become a member of the Montanus movement of female preachers around 207-210 according to scholars. In his Montanus influenced writings Tertullian was instrumental in playing a part in the development of the trinity doctrine. There is no record that he ever regretted this error. In his Montanus influenced writings Tertullian was instrumental in playing a part in the development of the trinity doctrine. There is no record that he ever regretted this error.

Early Church Father Tertullian (160-220 C.E.), an "ex-Pagan" and Bishop of Carthage, ironically admits the true origins of the Christ story and of all other such godmen by stating in refutation of his critics, *"You say we worship the sun; so do you"* (J. Wheless, Forgery In Christianity, p. 147). **Tertullian admits that the Christians are sun-worshippers** (Ibid.). **Interestingly, a previously strident believer and defender of the faith, Tertullian later renounced Christianity** (Ibid., p. 144). Tertullian was the most violent diatribist of them all in promoting the Christian religion, but renounced Christianity after 200 C.E. and became equally violent in propagating the extravagant heresy of Montanus. **In this refutation of faith he gave evidence that he was in error in his former complete acceptance of "literalistic" Christianity as the last word and irreconcilable posture in revealed truth - and revealed his own errant credulity.** Tertullian has once said about this "literalistic" Christianity: *"After we have believed, search should cease"*. He just told you that you need not study anything...only believe the "story" of the "literal" Christ. Sure! But most famous of all of Tertullian's sayings: *"I believe because it is unbelievable"* (Ibid.). I honestly think that such a man as this and his views on Marcion should be "suspect" from the "get go".

**Answer for yourself:** Why would such a staunch apologist of the Christian faith renounce his Christianity later in life?

**Answer for yourself:** Remember what Tertullian said above: *"You say we worship the sun; so do you"?* Well Tertullian knew in his day what you don't; or at least have not been told; namely that the story of Jesus in the New Testament is the same story told since ancient times about the Sun and the stars - constellations and their path in the Heavens told through personification. Only in this instance the names were again changed owing to the fact we are dealing with another language and another culture.

The facts of this ruse caused the Christians to go on a censorship rampage that led to the virtual illiteracy of the ancient world and ensured that their secret would be hidden from the masses, but the scholars of other schools/sects never gave up their arguments against the **historicizing of a very ancient mythological**

**creature.** We have lost the arguments of these learned dissenters because the Christians destroyed any traces of their works. Nonetheless, the Christians preserved the contentions of their detractors through the Christians' own refutations. "To get rid of the damning fact that there is no historical basis for their theological fictions, the Christian priesthood have been guilty of the heinous crime of destroying nearly all traces of the concurrent history of the first two centuries of the Christian era. What little of it they have permitted to come down to us, they have so altered and changed, as to destroy its historical value." (JM Roberts, Esq.) "In some of the ancient Egyptian temples the Christian iconoclasts, when tired of hacking and hewing at the symbolic figures incised in the chambers of imagery, and defacing the most prominent features of the monuments, found they could not dig out the hieroglyphics, and took to covering them over with plaster; and this plaster, intended to hide the meaning and stop the mouth of the stone word, has served to preserve the ancient writings as fresh in hue and sharp in outline as when they were first cut and colored. In a similar manner the temple of ancient religion was invaded and possession gradually gained by connivance of Roman power; and that enduring fortress, not built but quarried out of solid rock, was stuccoed all over the front and made white a-while with its look of brand-newness, and reopened under the sign of another name - that of the carnalized Christ." (Gerald Massey, The Historical Jesus And The Mythical Christ).

**Answer for yourself:** What did Tetrullian really know that was the impetus for his change of faith from "literalistic" Christianity?

Tetrullian knew that there was no single historical person upon whom the Christian religion was founded, and that "Jesus Christ" is a compilation of legends, heroes, gods and godmen. There is not adequate room here to go into detail about each god or godman that contributed to the formation of the Jewish Jesus character; suffice it to say that there is plenty of documentation to show that this issue is not a question of "faith" or "belief." The truth is that during the era this character supposedly lived there was an extensive library at Alexandria and an incredibly nimble brotherhood network that stretched from Europe to China, and this information network had access to numerous manuscripts that told the same narrative portrayed in the New Testament with different place names and ethnicity for the characters.

Tetrullian knew the "Christ Myth" of the New Testament was but a personification or allegory of the "Sun". it would be this reason that will lead him at the end of his life to renounce belief in a historical Jesus and turn from Christianity. Tertullian knew that the Christ Myth of the New Testament was an adaptation of the Ancient's understanding of God and His Cosmos. The reason why all these narratives of pagan godmen and goddesses are so similar, with a godman who is crucified and resurrected (allegorical for the intersection of the ecliptical and celestial orbit of the Earth around the Sun), who does miracles and has 12 disciples, is that these stories were based on the movements of the sun through the heavens, an astrotheological development that can be found throughout the planet because the sun and the 12 zodiac signs can be observed around the globe. In other words, Jesus Christ and all the others upon whom this character is predicated are personifications of the sun, and the Gospel fable is merely a rehash of a mythological formula (the "Mythos," as mentioned above) revolving around the movements of the sun through the heavens. Along with this is mixed of course many religious concepts handed down from the ancients regarding God and God's relationship to mankind through the Cosmos (Logos, Sophia, Christ).

In actuality, the legend of Jesus nearly identically parallels the story of Krishna, for example, even in detail, as was presented by noted mythologist and scholar Gerald Massey over 100 years ago, as well as by Rev. Robert Taylor 160 years ago, among others (Gnostic and Historic Christianity by Massey). Only one needs to purchase a few good books to see this for yourself:

- The Jesus Mysteries by T. Freke and P. Gandy
- The Diegesis by Rev. Robert Taylor,
- Jesus and the Lost Goddess by T. Freke and P. Gandy,
- The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors by Kersey Graves,
- Pagan Christs by JM Robertson, any works by Hilton Hotema,



**Pagan and Christian Creeds by Edward Carpenter,**

- **Deceptions and Myths of the Bible** by Lloyd Graham.
- **The Christ Conspiracy..The Greatest Story Every Sold** by Acharya S. (and I could go on and on).

Although some historicizers may desire to dismiss such evidence by saying that these evidences are "outdated" nothing could be further from the truth. **These numbers are provided here to demonstrate that this truth has been known, and has been suppressed by vested interests, for a long time.** The Krishna tale as told in the Hindu Vedas has been dated to at least as far back as 1400 B.C.E. The same can be said of the well-woven Horus mythos, which also is practically identical, in detail, to the Jesus story, but which predates the Christian version by thousands of years.

If one takes the time to become familiar with such knowledge expressed above then one is hard pressed to look at the testimony of these "literalistic" Church Fathers and have any faith that anything that they teach concerning "the Christ" and "Jesus" is correct. But that is easy for me to say because I have devoted years to such studies. I don't expect the normal Christian of today to read such things and believe them at first glance. I only hope this information piques your curiosity to study these things out for yourself by taking our lead and direction for the path of your studies. I will make you one promise: If you do take our challenge to study the truth about "the Christ" and the allegorical understanding of Christ Jesus before it was literalized by these Early Church Fathers then you will see exactly what I and untold others have seen who did these studies before you; namely, **that the Gnostic First New Testament of Marcion containing the authentic Pauline Epistles and a proto-Lukan "Q" gospel expressed a Gnostic non-human "Christ" that dwells within each person and not a fleshly human Christ Jesus. It would take 40 years for the proto-Catholic Irenaeus and others to add to the existing Marcionite New Testament key writings and books which were ascribed to Apostles in the Roman refutation of the "Gnostic Christ".**



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# MARCION'S CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

## MARCION'S CANON

**According to Brooke Westcott, Marcion's Canon is "the first of which there is any record"** (Brook Foss Westcott, A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament, (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 318. Marcion's Canon demonstrated a two-fold division: The Gospel and The Apostle. This division is derived by observing Tertullian's terms "the Gospel" in AM 4, and "the Apostle" in AM 5. Book IV is devoted to Marcion's Luke, and Book V is devoted to the Marcion's Pauline Epistles. Not all scholars today believe as taught by early Catholicism that the Gospel was an highly edited version of Luke. We have seen that Marcion's "proto-Lule" redated the later Gospel of Luke given to us today. The Apostle was composed of ten Pauline Epistles. Marcion's arrangement of the letters in The Apostle were as follows:

- **Galatians,**
- **1 and 2 Corinthians combined,**
- **Romans,**
- **1 and 2 Thessalonians combined,**
- **Laodiceans (Ephesians),**
- **Colossians,**
- **Philippians, and**
- **Philemon.**

The evidence for this arrangement is Tertullian's order of criticism in Against Marcion Book V, and the Marcionite Prologues to the Letters of Paul found in many Latin manuscripts. The Marcionite Prologues to the Letters of Paul may be found in Knox, Marcion, 169-171 (in Latin and English); and Souter, Text and Canon, 188-191 (Latin). In Book V, Tertullian devoted Chapters 2-4 to Galatians, Chapters 5-10 to First Corinthians, Chapters 11-14 to Second Corinthians, Chapter 15 to First Thessalonians, Chapter 16 to Second Thessalonians, Chapters 17-18 to Laodiceans-Ephesians (Tertullian expressly identifies Marcion's Laodoea as Ephesians AM 5.17, in ANE, vol 3., 464), Chapter 19 to Colossians, Chapter 20 to Philippians, and Chapter 21 to Philemon (Tertullian, AM, 5, in ANE, vol. 3, p. 429-474). **Since Marcion's Canon or texts are not extant, the order in which Tertullian interacted with Marcion must suffice as primary evidence for Marcion's content and arrangement.**

The above evidence concerning the content and arrangement of Marcion's Canon is strengthened by Epiphanius. Epiphanius explicitly indicated the order in which ten of Paul's letters came in Marcion's Bible. The content and arrangement were the same as that implied by Tertullian with one exception: Philippians and Philemon were inverted (Epiphanius, Panarion, I, Haer. 42).

**Answer for yourself:** There were several significant omissions in Marcion's Luke. Four of the most prominent omissions were the birth narrative of Jesus (1:1-2:52), the record of John the Baptist, the genealogy of Jesus, and the temptation narrative (3:1b-4-15). Having now seen over and over again the lack of evidence both historical, archeological and even textual as seen in the earliest New Testament does it now seem reasonable that we should not expect to find these types of testimony owing to the fact that the earliest Christians were Gnostics



and semi-Gnostics and did not believe in a human and fleshly Christ Jesus but rather a Divine Concept (the Christ) which had only "come down" from Heaven as a "spiritual entity" at Capernaum?

The Pauline corpus of writings certainly differ today when compared with the earliest collection of Pauline writings given to us by Marcion in 140 C.E. Some scholars suggested that Marcion's base text was lacking. Others suggested that Marcion purposefully omitted parts of the texts because of his theology. And some scholars provided for both. But what these scholars fail to give us is why many of these "omissions", if they had existed in Marcion's day, would have been perfect passages that Marcion could have used in his presentation of his Christianity as well as his debates with Judaism. It would seem to a thinking believer that such reasoning is unfounded. **Westcott did not believe Marcion altered the Pauline Epistles.** He wrote, *"**Marcion preserved without alteration the text which he found in his Manuscript**"* (Westcott, History of the Canon, p. 320).

In Marcion's Canon, eight of Paul's ten epistles were basically the same as modern texts. **Galatians and Romans, however were very different:**

Marcion's Galatians lacked Paul's interaction with Peter and James in Jerusalem (1:18-24),

- **The account of Abraham's faithfulness (3:6-9), and other passages:**
- **2:6-9a;**
- **3:1-12,**
- **14a,**
- **15-25;**
- **4:27-30.**
- **Romans did not contain 1:17b,**
- **1:19-21,**
- **3:31-4:25,**
- **8:19-22,**
- **9:1-33, 1**
- **0:5-11:32, and**
- **all of chapters 15 and 16.26**

## CONCLUSION

Marcion was very influential in the formation of the New Testament Canon. His most important contribution may have been to virtually guarantee that the Pauline Epistles would eventually enjoy the same status as the Gospels (Knox, Marcion, p. 49-50). Marcion's critics were forced to decide about the Pauline works and their relationship to the Gospels, which were already held in high esteem.



# THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT OF MARCION THE Gnostic

Marcion is the first Gentile Christian to publish a fixed collection of books which contained a story of the life of Jesus and the writings of Paul. Notice I said "Gentile" because Matthew, Yeshua's Jewish apostle, is recorded in the writings of Papias to have written the first "life of Christ" in Hebrew. **Sadly we do not possess this Hebrew gospel today although many say that we do possess it today as the Evan Bohan manuscript that predates the 14th century. Many say that this supposed "Hebrew Gospel of Matthew" is the original gospel of the Apostle Levi spoken of by Papias and that it has been handed down from previous generations of Jewish scribes. This is a joke as one easily sees when one examines the text and is struck right off the bat by the "virgin birth" narrative; something completely foreign to Judaism let alone the true Messiah of Israel.**

Other Gentiles would later adopt Marcion's new concept of "collecting writings concerning Jesus" and gathering them into a collection. This "collection" of writings was called the "New Testament." **Before Marcion we find no evidence that the Gentile "church" regarded any writings "about" Jesus on the same level as the Old Testament in authority.** Since 2 Timothy 3:14-15 states: ***"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."***

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that "salvation" had always been available in the Scriptures that Timothy had known since he was a child, which mind you was long before any New Testament documents were ever written?

**These "holy Scriptures" to which the writer of 2 Timothy refers were the Old Testament for the New Testament had not been written yet, let alone collected into a "new Bible" at the time of Paul's writing to Timothy.** Although Paul's writings were read in the Gentile churches, **the early church had no need to replace their Bible which currently was the Tanakh or Old Testament in order to preach "salvation."** It was understood that Paul's writings would be of special benefit for the Gentile churches as his epistles were specifically addressed to congregations and churches in Gentile territories where the congregants did not have the biblical background to which the normal Hebrew was accustomed. If you will look at the "whole" of Paul's writings they are usually for purposes of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction to Gentiles who were very ignorant of the ways of God, since not having had the advantage of growing up in Godly homes. It was to these Gentiles who were once strangers from the covenant promises, prior aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, who had been without hope and without God in the world that Paul wrote to promote repentance in their lives in hopes they would live a more Godly life-style.

***Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (KJV)***



Therefore it is quite understandable, knowing the facts, to say that the early Gentile church in the days of Paul did not have a compelling need to replace the Hebrew Scriptures (Torah) with a "new Bible." However, that was what to happen shortly.



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## THE NON-PAULINE PARTS OF GALATIANS ...WHAT ARE WE BELIEVING AS CHRISTIANS?

Grace - a word which has so oftentimes been mentioned by the lips of Bible-believing Christians. There has been so much emphasis on grace doctrines in the church today that the church has comparatively little knowledge and understanding of the Law as in the Old Testament. The church is not even aware that this shift of focus had been propagated ever since the 2nd century.

**Answer for yourself:** What has caused the church to pay so little attention to the Law and the Prophets and other parts of the Bible and so much attention to Paul and his writings on grace? If you are honest it would be the over-emphasis over time of the Pauline writing entitled "The Book of Galatians."

The church today is in reality very much influenced by a "church father" by the name of Marcion. At the beginning, after all the apostles had died, the leaders who replaced them were mostly Gentiles from pagan backgrounds. These Gentiles had comparatively little understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures as compared to the Jewish apostles who had been exposed to the teachings of the Law and the Prophets since their childhood. As such, the danger was there to have a shift in focus to the New Testament and this First New Testament was provided to the world by Marcion the "heretic Gnostic."

### MARCION'S UNDERSTANDING OF PAUL AND JESUS

Marcion's reference was always the teachings of Paul (the only apostle whom he trusted), especially that of the saving grace. In his belief, the saving grace of God was miraculous. He held the whole creation to be faulty, being the creation of a lesser god, thus containing no element of the divine. Marcion was influenced by Persian dualism (two forces in the universe, one good and one bad, who are constantly fighting it out for supremacy) and believed that the Creator God who created the material universe was the God of Israel, who was a totally different God from the Father spoken of in the gospel of Christ. The Father Marcion held as the highest was perfect, good and merciful. He was love and He was not the god of justice and the lawgiver of the Old Testament, the bad God.

Marcion claimed that nothing of truth and good could be found in the Old Testament and that after Jesus Christ, the Law was obsolete. Jesus had come to free man from the Law. He believed that the gospel is entirely a gospel of love to the exclusion of the Mosaic Law. The preaching in the church today that we are no longer under the Law but under grace alone is part of his theology.

Marcion, therefore, rejected the entire Old Testament. Today, many believers also make a clear division between the Old Testament Law and New Testament grace, and view the



Law as opposed to grace. The Law is seen as obsolete and of little use to a Christian. They shun the Old Testament God because He is too stern and fierce. The judgements that He made was far too "terrifying" for them to take. They would rather focus on the "New Testament God" who does not expect obedience to His laws. He is kind and forbids sin; but will give choice to each individual. Thus, the spirit of Marcion still has a very strong influence on the Church today.

By the time Marcion finished editing the Scriptures and rejecting any New Testament writings which seemingly spoke favourably of "Jewish practices", his "Bible" consisted only of ten of Paul's epistles and portion's of oral tradition that we find today in parts of Luke's Gospel. For him, the church was to replace the synagogue, grace was to replace the Law, pagan holidays were to replace the Holy Days of the Lord as found in Leviticus 23, spiritual Israel was to replace physical Israel, and the church was Israel's replacement and was now to receive all that had been promised to Israel.

As to actual history, then, Marcion started with Paul. For Marcion Paul was the "only" one to know the truth concerning the acutal teachings of Jesus and was the only one who had really understood the mission of the Christ, and had rescued the teaching from the obscurantism of Jewish sectarianism. Of the manifold versions of the Gospel, he would have the Pauline alone. Marcion rejected every other recension, including those "unnamed writings" who would later be ascribed to Matthew, Mark, and John. The Gospel we recognize as the Gospel according to Luke, the "follower of Paul," he also rejected, regarding it as a recension to suit the views of the Judaising party. It was "too" Jewish. His Gospel was presumably the collection of Sayings in use among the Pauline churches of his day.

## **THE DEBATE CONCERNING MARCION'S COLLECTION OF THE PUALINE WRITINGS AVAILABLE IN 150 A.D.**

Of course the Patristic writers say that Marcion mutilated some of Paul's writings because what existed in Marcion's collection of Pauline writings in 150 A.D. differed substantially with those of the Second New Testament in 180 A.D. by Irenaeus. It is almost impossible to believe that so keen a anti-Jewish critic as Marcion, with his anti-Law bias, would have not retained certain verses from the Pauline writings which supported his religious views, but upon examination of his collection of Pauline epistles, are noticeably absent! Much we see today as recorded in the Pauline epistles, much of which would have been adopted and advocated by Marcion, are strangely absent in his presentation of the then "existing" epistles of Paul!

One needs to understand right up front that Marcion was strongly anti-Jewish. Being a Gnostic and a supporter of Paul tells us that within Paul's writings we should expect to find Gnostic elements regardless if we recognize them or not. Being Gnostic Marcion struggled with the concept of "evil." If the G-d of the Bible, revealed to His Jewish people as YHVH had been good G-d then He would not have made such an imperfect world seen filled with hatred, disease, chaos, man's inhumanity to man. The Jews, being the people of this Creator G-d had to likewise be "evil" as well. Surely, Marcion summized, that somewhere above this evil Jewish G-d had to be a G-d of perfection that had nothing to do

with this creation we call "earth and mankind." He summarized that Jesus was the ambassador of this "perfect transcendent G-d" which was above the Creator G-d of the Jewish Scriptures. Such is the spiritual hierarchy of Gnosticism. Since G-d of the Bible was "evil" in that He created an imperfect world filled with suffering then all things emanating from Him were likewise "evil" and this included G-d's Law...the Torah.

**Answer for yourself:** What is the implication in knowing that Marcion, the producer of the First New Testament, pro-Pauline, was anti-Jewish, and anti-Torah?

*The implications are fairly simple. We should expect to find in Marcion's First New Testament and his collection of ten of the Pauline writings and epistles the passages that existed in his day that are of his theological persuasion and would be well used by him in his attack upon Judaism. We should expect to find in the first collection of Pauline passages those passages that are anti-Jewish and anti-Torah as well as all other parts of the Pauline writings we are familiar with today.*

**Answer for yourself:** What is the most startling thing that confronts one when he examines the Marcion First New Testament regarding the Pauline writings? The complete omission of many passages one would expect Marcion to present and use if they existed in his day since they are anti-Jewish and anti-Law and anti-Torah. They simply are not there!

**Answer for yourself:** What is the implied implication in such omission of so many of the Pauline verses that are anti-Law and anti-Jewish as we find in today's Galatians? Simply that they did not exist in 150 A.D. in the Galatians as first written by Paul but were added later by the Gentile Church in their further rejection of the Jerusalem Church and its faith!

**Answer for yourself:** What parts of the Pauline collection of 10 epistles are not existent in the First New Testament? These ten letters were called The Apostles ["Apostolikon"].

## THE MISSING PARTS OF GALATIANS NOT PRESENT IN 150 A.D.

If you have been a faithful reader of this website so far then you realize that Paul never had the sanction of the Jerusalem Church nor its Apostles. In order to give validity to Paul as the Roman Religious juggernaut advanced both their political and religious ends in the name of Paul over their constituents it was expedient for Rome to give Paul "Apostolic authority" not only for himself but for "his gospel." One way of doing this was to include in his writings a "false Apostolic support" by adding to the original Galatians such passages which were absent at first; such passages as:

**Answer for yourself:** Gal 1:18-24 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. 21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: 23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me. (KJV)

and

Gal 2:6-9 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought



effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the (KJV)

These two groups of passages did not exist in 150 A.D. and were later added by Irenaeus or another "Gentile redactor" of these texts in 180 A.D.

As if not giving Paul a "false Apostolic support" was not enough, we find that other more incriminating passages were added to Galatians. Almost all of chapter 3 of Galatians is added in 180 A.D.; all but "one" verse. Let us examine the doctrines of Galatians chapter 3 which were not in the First Galatians. In reading these you should ask yourself this question:

Answer for yourself: If these passages had been in existence in 150 A.D. then what reason should Marcion, a self-confessed anti-Jewish, pro-Paulinist, anti-Law, pro-Jesus "Christian" possibly have for not including them in the Galatians which existed in 150 A.D.?

**Answer for yourself:** What possible reason could Marcion have for not using these "pro-Pauline and anti-Law" passages or excluding them from an existing Galatians which possibly contained them?

Really now for many of these passages would have been perfect to use in Marcion's anti-Jewish Christianity if they existed at that time. Many scholars have been honest enough to admit that Marcion did not "omit" them from the text but that these passages we find today in our Galatians of 180 A.D. and later were simply not written by Paul but later by a "pro-Paul" disciple like Irenaeus or others. This means anti-Semitic Gentiles are continuing to write the New Testament texts long after the death of Paul and the Apostles and we have sadly inherited such anti-Law propaganda as if "inspired, inerrant, and G-d-breathed" when the reverse is true

## **GALATIANS CHAPTER 3...THE MISSING PART OF THE ORIGINAL GALATIANS**

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that only "one" verse from the whole of Galatians chapter 3 was in the first Galatians collected?

It is not possible in the space of one article to address all of the problems inherent in Galatians chapter 3 but it is startling to look at some of the doctrines in Galatians chapter 3 which were not there in 150 A.D.:



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## MARCION & CHRISTIANITY'S FIRST NEW TESTAMENT

Marcion is the first person known to us who published a fixed collection of what we would call New Testament books. Others may have done so before him; if so, we have no knowledge of them. Marcion is a complex individual as he did some things that were great yet at the same time held certain religious beliefs concerning the "origin of evil" in the Cosmos which would lead to his understanding that there were must be two different Gods; a good and perfect God of love and a imperfect God who is responsible for a flawed creation. Behind this understanding we find the Persian influence of "dualism" which we will see momentarily. This imperfect God was to Marcion the God of the Jews whom the Old Testament often depicts as cruel. Marcion and many others saw that certain accounts within the Old Testament appear to depict God not as holy, kind, good, and merciful, but instead as unjust, mean, vengeful, and unmerciful. Over time many people have struggled with the problem of the existence of "evil" in the world and its origin. Many have devised many ideas explaining its existence and origin and many have tried valiantly not to lay the blame for evil upon the Creator. One group of whom we are interested in concerning this problem of the existence of evil are men like Marcion and other Gnostics. They struggled in coming to terms as to how can God be called "good" in light of such tragic events from the hands of Jehovah as found in the Old Testament and in so doing reasoned that a supreme God was incapable of such evil. That being the case they reasoned that another was delegated as the Creator of the material universe to which this "evil" was to reside. Simply said the Old Testament God of the Jews (Jehovah) was this cruel God and the God as taught by Christ Jesus in the New Testament was the good God of love. This concept would cause Marcion to be discredited along with much good he did and taught. This rejection of Marcion later by Rome and the threat of his successes would cause Rome to develop a course of behavior to discredit him and lead to prolific attacks upon Marcion and Gnostic theology which was expressed by the earliest followers of "the Christ" (Christians). The result of such reasoning of Marcion about the origin of evil should expect us to see the devaluing of the Old Testament by such Gnostic Christians as Marcion as well as Paul and that is exactly what we see.

Because of this unusual stance upon the origin and existence of evil in the world Gnostics like Marcion rejected the Old Testament totally, as having no relevance or authority for Christians. That being so we should expect to find and we do a different collection of religious documents that would compete with the Jewish Bible for authority and this collection by Marcion of documents expressing his views was taken from mainly Paul and was designed to be the first New Testament. I wonder what the God of the Jewish people thought of his endeavors since Marcion threw out the Bible given to Israel by God through Moses and other anointed Prophets. Like I said earlier there are things that Marcion did which was great and no so great; discarding the Tanakh and God's Laws and Commandments was not great! It is amazing that before Marcion (over 140 years) we find no evidence of the "early church" using or even having a need for any writings other than the Jewish Bible and the Hebrew Scriptures. Just consider this one fact for a minute.

**Answer for yourself:** What implications does this have for you as a believer who attends contemporary churches where the Old Testament is rarely used?



## MARCION...THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL...AND NEW BIBLE

Marcion was born about 100 C.E. at Sinope, a seaport on the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor. His father was a leader in the synagogue of that city, and Marcion was brought up in the Apostolic Faith. Of all the apostles, the one who appealed to him most strongly was Paul, to whom he became passionately devoted, ultimately concluding that Paul was the ONLY apostle who preserved the teaching of "the Christ" in its purity. This strikes me as almost unbelievable if there existed in Marcion's day actual historical writings from the hands of the Christ's Apostles. Paul never met Jesus Christ in the flesh or heard him preach or teach one lesson. Paul's only encounter with Christ Jesus was a vision; it is for that reason I find it hard to imagine that Marcion would discount the lives and testimonies of those who would not only have known a human Christ Jesus personally if he had existed, but supposedly lived and ministered along his side for three and one-half years. It is hard for any unbiased person to believe that Paul's understanding could have been greater than those who supposedly lived among and with "the Christ" for these three years. Even more so impossible almost to believe is the fact that Paul could be trusted for truth over James for example; for after all James is recorded for us as Christ Jesus' brother who we would think lived with him over thirty years and is also recorded to be Jesus' choice to lead the Messianic Congregation after his ascension (and not Paul). These issues bring many questions as to why a vision is accepted over the existence of historical data; that is if the historical data existed at all!

Marcion embraced with great zeal the teachings of Paul, especially his gospel of justification by divine grace, apart from legal works (the Law). This is understandable in light of Gnosticism and its view concerning the existence of evil and the intent of the Law and the hopeless condition of human beings. "Matter is evil!" was the cry of the Gnostics. This was an idea borrowed from certain Greek philosophers. It is this belief that all matter (flesh) is evil that explains why the earliest Gnostic Christians denied the later teaching of an incarnation. If matter is evil, then Jesus Christ could not be true God and true man, for Christ is in no way evil. Thus many Gnostic Christians would later deny the teaching of the Incarnation, claiming that Christ only appeared to be a man as the Adam Kadmon, but that his humanity was an illusion. Before you discount this idea you need to take a deep breath and keep reading and studying the early Gnostic Christians and the later forgery and invention of the Second New Testament by Roman "literalists" which will try to refute this earliest "allegorical" belief of "the Christ" as held by the early church. Some Gnostics, recognizing that the Old Testament taught that the God of the Jews created the physical Universe and all matter, claimed, as mentioned above, that the God of the Jews was an evil deity who created "evil" within the Cosmos and could not be a perfect God and therefore had to be distinct from the New Testament God of Jesus Christ which taught only love. They also proposed belief in many divine beings, known as "aeons," who mediated between man and the ultimate, unreachable God. One of these intermediaries that bridged the gap from the Spirit to Matter was "the Christ" (Sophia---the feminine Christ). The lowest of these aeons, the one who had contact with men, was named "Jesus Christ". This means that the Jesus Christ of Marcion and Paul in his authentic epistles and the First New Testament was not a human being with flesh as we supposed. This again is clouded to us today by the Rome's later forgery of Marcion's First New Testament as well as later anti-Gnostic forgeries of supposed Pauline letters that purport to espouse an anti-Gnostic bias. Thus we misunderstand the Pauline "Christ" today when reading the new testament since conditioned to think of this "Christ" and "being in Christ" as a human being when in fact the earliest followers of "the Christ" never did. Since all matter is evil (flesh-body) then we now understand why Gnostics practiced celibacy and asceticism, on the grounds that the pleasures of the flesh were evil as well as the hesitancy to bring more souls into the realm of physical evil; a few however practiced libertarianism, arguing that since the body was evil they should defile it. This led to further distrust, and was an accusation leveled against other groups who did not follow this practice. But the idea concerning the Gnostic's regard for "Law" that leaps out at us in light of the fact that Judaism teaches that the Torah and God's Laws are a training ground to perfect ourselves before God; to train ourselves unto holiness. The Law is to teach the Believer how to serve and worship God, how to treat our fellow man, how to be happy on earth by having God as our authority, and shows us how we are to imitate the good, holy, just and perfect nature of God and in so doing serves as a viable standard of His will for all His children. Gnostics, seeing all matter evil including the flesh, saw no need in redeeming and sanctifying the flesh



according to such Laws and Torah since the body and flesh was beyond "saving". Judaism of course sees it differently; that the body is to be sanctified to be a Holy vessel for the presence of God to dwell and that is accomplished through righteous conduct and behavior. Understand before we move on that many Gnostics saw it this way as well; Paul being one of them and much of his writings contain a high level of ethics and conduct as taught to the Gentiles.

The disregard for the Law is an incorrect assessment as I have shown in previous newsletters regarding the role of the Law with grace. Marcion has been called "the only man in the early church who understood Paul" yet Paul and Marcion did not always agree. Marcion's refusal to allow any element of law-keeping (obedience to the Law) to be connected to Paul's understanding of the message of salvation (which is connected with faith) led Marcion to the tragic and incorrect conclusion that the Old Testament, its laws and statutes had been superseded by the gospel of love as taught by his Christ Jesus. There is only one problem: the Bible in the New Testament never says that (often you have to consult the original languages to see the hidden truths and more correct understandings concerning this issue). Due to inadequate renderings in the English (see the article above and the word "iniquity") we often arrive at conclusions which were never intended by the original writers. The gospel and good news which Marcion believed and shared was to him an "entirely new teaching brought to earth by the "the Christ". Marcion, being a gnostic as described above, had no need for Law to perfect the flesh as taught in the Law, prophets, and writings. If some passages in Paul's correspondence Paul praises the Law and these passages were reasoned by Marcion to be a kind of "Judaizing" (reverting back to Hebraic customs and understandings) against whom Marcion believed Paul to have preached against in Galatians and other letters. Because Marcion connected the Jews with their "evil" God of cruelty as often depicted in the Old Testament he saw no need for the message from this God as found in the Law, Prophets, and Writings; therefore he omitted them from his collection of religious writings that comprised his Bible. For Marcion since the flesh was evil then there was no need for Laws to try to save or perfect the flesh; the goal was escape from this flesh and the release of the spirit within it. Space will not allow here to the understanding how the revelation of "the Christ" within led to no longer needing Laws to order conduct but Gnostics believed in living yielded to the "Spirit-Christ" within once one comes to the self-awareness that God lives within them. When one come to the knowledge that they have come from God and will return to God then this awareness should motivate one to live the Laws of God written on their hearts; there is no need for a "book of Laws". Just yield to God within whom you really are since God is in all things and constitutes all things (more on that later).

*Rom 7:24 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (KJV)*

It was through the knowledge of "the Christ within" that you found deliverance from the realm of the "flesh" and in so doing you put off the corrupt "old man" and put on the "new man" of whom you had come to know dwells within you.

*Eph 4:22-5:5 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*



**Having understood Marcion and the Gnostic view of evil and the role of Law then let us move on.**

Sources teach us that Marcion appears to have remained in communion with the "proto-Catholic Church" of his day so long as he lived in Asia Minor. There is some reasons to think that he shared his religious thoughts with leading churchmen of the region, such as Polycarp of Smyrna (disciple of the Apostle John) and Papias of Hierapolis, but found them unresponsive. **The core of Marcion's religious beliefs were cradled in Gnosticism and his support of Paul as the ONLY one who knew the real message of Jesus should alert us to the fact that Paul must be Gnostic as well. Paul's gnostic religious beliefs and theology go unnoticed today and instead of being recognized as part of Gnosticism pass for orthodox "Christianity" which they were not; in fact they are the complete opposite of what orthodox Christianity will evolve into.**

Desiring a more positive response for his teachings, Marcion ventured to talk with the churchman of Rome where he made a handsome donation of money to the church (he was a ship owner and was quite well off). His understanding of the gospel and its implications was so self-evidently right to his own way of thinking that he could not believe that it would fail to be equally self-evident to any other unprejudiced mind. But the Roman churchmen were disturbed by his doctrine that inferred the presence of two Gods that they not only rejected it but even returned the money he had presented to the church! That would be a miracle if done in today's churches!

On the surface of this you can rush to judgment of Marcion but I have found that this is not wise. As stated earlier man has since the beginning of time struggled with the problem of evil and its origin. This is the question which has exercised the reason and tried the faith of men in all ages of the world. Men like Marcion and hundreds of other philosophers that preceded him struggled with how can the existence of evil, physical and moral, be reconciled with the benevolence and holiness of a God infinite in his wisdom and power. The existence of evil is generally regarded as significant evidence against theism but for men like Marcion who were believers in a Creator it only plunged them into a deeper reflection of how such a paradox could exist...love and evil. While evil has in this way often prompted atheism, it is also capable of having the opposite effect as we find with Marcion and untold others.

In trying to find a satisfying answer Marcion reasoned as did other Gnostic Christians that there is evil in the world and that people do bad things. Bad things happen to good people. The world isn't what it ought to be. God, however, is all good, all knowing, and all powerful. Marcion struggled with this "question of all questions": If God is good, then how can evil exist? If God is all good, He wants to prevent evil. If He is all knowing, He knows how to do it. If He is all powerful, He is capable of doing it. So, what's the problem? Why is there evil?

If there's something wrong with the world, the fault must lie with some component in that chain between an all good and loving God and mankind. Marcion reasoned, in protecting the image of a loving God, that there must exist a "sub-creator" who is not "all good" like the Supreme God. Marcion further reasoned that the "Creator God" of this realm of physical evil must not be all good and is indifferent to the sufferings of his creatures. This led Marcion to futher believer that this "sub-God" is not all knowing and possibly ignorant of the suffering of mankind. To Marcion this "Creator God" was possibly not all powerful; perhaps He would like to help but can't. Thus Marcion came to understand the existence of a Supreme God of love and a "lesser God" responsible for the existence of evil.

Plato's solution is to blame matter. Matter is eternal; it was not created by God, but existed as the stuff of the world prior to any of God's creative activity. Matter, moreover, has limitations. God did the best He could with the materials He had. But those materials were imperfect, and led to imperfections in the product.

Philo, as we've seen, rejected this solution as incompatible with the Genesis account of creation. God created the world, not out of preexisting matter, but out of nothing. God created matter and formed it into the world. But if so, any imperfections in matter must be the fault of God. So, we can't blame evil on the imperfections of matter. Philo takes the only option remaining and blames the existence of evil upon the angels, the construction workers



who did their best to construct the world according to God's plan, but who were not themselves perfect. There is nothing in Genesis to support this idea, but nothing contradicts it. Philo sees the unacceptability of the other possibilities as an argument for the existence of angels and for their role in creation.

Gnostics like Marcion and Valentinus rejects Philo's solution, and elaborates Plato's. We can't blame the angels. If they weren't up to the job, why did God hire them to do the building? He must have known they would create an imperfect world. He must not have wanted that to happen. Being all powerful, He could have prevented it; He surely could have constructed the world without their help. The world contains evil. The world moreover consists of matter and form. So, the imperfection must stem from form or from matter. It cannot stem from form; the Forms are ideas in the mind of God, and so can't be imperfect. (Neither can it stem from the manner of their combination with matter; the forms, being ideas in God's perfect mind, are perfectly suited to matter.) Matter, then, must be imperfect. The world is evil because matter is evil. That is one of the chief contentions of Gnosticism: Matter is evil. But we can't stop there.

**Answer for yourself:** Who created matter? Who made the decision to use it to build the world? If the answer is God, it seems that we must blame God after all. Thus Marcion subjugated this "evil Creator God" to the Supreme God of love as taught by "the Christ".

So, Marcion and Valentinus said that we must understand the details of how the world came into being. Genesis does not tell us-at least, not directly; neither does the New Testament. But if we read the Bible allegorically, and attend to the secret knowledge Jesus passed on to His closest followers, we can understand how matter came to be evil, and in the process understand how we can have knowledge of the Forms.

**Not only did Marcion regard Paul as the only faithful apostle of "the Christ"; he maintained that the original apostles and messengers of "the Christ" had corrupted their Master's teaching with an admixture of legalism (Law). Not only did Marcion reject the Old Testament; but now you understand why he distinguished the God of the Old Testament from the God of the New Testament. Now we have two Gods.** This distinction of two deities, each with his independent existence speaks of the Gnostic influence on Marcion's thought. The God who created the material universe, the God of Israel, was (as Marcion held) different from the Father of whom "the Christ" spoke. The Father of "the Christ" was the good and merciful God of whom none had ever heard of before until "the Christ" came to reveal him. Along the lines of Gnostic teachings, the God who made the material world was an inferior deity (inferior in status and morality) to the supreme God who was pure spirit. **Now we have a "good God" and an "evil God" (shades of Zoroastrianism).** The Gnostic depreciation of the material order finds an echo in Marcion's refusal to believe that "the Christ" entered human life by being "born of a woman" (Ga. 4:4) but **rather descended bodily from Heaven as the Gnostic Savior.** The result of such teaching is that one will look forward to the day that he can escape from the evil body and become pure spirit.

*Rom 7:24 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (KJV)*

**Paul bought into this dualism in a big way as seen in Romans 7 and 8 when the Hebrew Scriptures stated otherwise: "we are fearfully and wonderfully made."**

The church of Rome found Marcion's teachings unacceptable. **Rome, in refutation of the Gnostic idea for the origin of evil as well as their understanding of "the Christ" would have to counteract Marcion's influence, teachings, and Marcion's First New Testament and so in 180 A.D. we find Irenaeus presenting the world with a counter-Marcion anti-Gnostic "Second New Testament."** So Marcion, despairing of being able to convince the catholic church anywhere of the truth of his message, withdrew from the catholic fellowship and established a church of his own. The church survived for several generations which is surprising since its membership was maintained solely through conversion. It could not keep its membership up by incorporating the children of existing members, for celibacy was obligatory on all its membership. At the same time, Marcion was a faithful enough Paulinist to allow no discrimination against female members of his church in matters of privilege or function because he agreed with Paul that there was ***"neither male nor***



**female" (Gal. 3:28).**

As stated above Marcion provided his followers with an his rendition of the First New Testament. Marcion's new scriptures included no part of the Old Testament (Jewish Bible) and were written in Greek. Please keep in mind that he did not call his collection "The New Testament". It would be another 100 years or so before anyone would come up with that idea. **"The Christ" had been gone over 110 years before Marcion decided to create his new scriptures. Just think about it! Christianity did not have a need for a "New Testament" for well over one hundred years!**

**Answer for yourself:** From what did the church teach during that 110 years since they did not have a New Testament?

## **THE EARLY CHURCH USED THE THE JEWISH BIBLE (OLD TESTAMENT ONLY)**

A number of questions should come to your mind at this time:

- **Answer for yourself:** Why didn't the "church" see a need for a New Testament?
- **Answer for yourself:** Why didn't "the Christ" tell his disciples to copy his words & produce a replacement Bible?
- **Answer for yourself:** Why didn't "the Christ" and his apostles record "the Christ's" words or their own (sorry..the Gospels we have were written much later and betray Gentile authorship)?
- **Answer for yourself:** Why were the writings of the Jewish Bible used as the only Scripture by the Jewish church?

**Answer for yourself:** Can we now begin to see why Marcion was so "anti-Semitic"? We should now having understood his reasoning of the existence of evil as coming from the God of the Jewish Old Testament.

## **MARCION'S NEW TESTAMENT...THE NEED FOR A MESSAGE OF LOVE FROM THE SUPREME GOD**

**Marcion created "new scriptures" for his followers. He referred to them by the titles he gave to the two component parts:**

- **The Gospel**
- **The Apostle**
- **The Antitheses**

**To his own Bible he would later add a series of "Antitheses," which set out the incompatibility of law and gospel, of the Creator-Judge of the Old Testament and the merciful Father of the New Testament (who had nothing to do with either creation or judgment).**

Because Marcion saw "two Gods" he had need for only the revelation of the "good God" or the New Testament which served as a "replacement testament" to **replace the Old Testament** of the "Creator-Judge" God of the Old Testament.

**Answer for yourself:** Now, let me ask you do you believe in two Gods? How about three? Get the point?

**The first idea of replacing "law" with "grace" came from one who denied the cardinal teaching of the Bible: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is ONE!"** So when people tell you that they are "not under

the Law" I wonder if they do not believe in Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, who gave the Law in the first place as the greatest expression of what love "does" and "does not."

The holy Scriptures to which Marcion's "Antitheses" served as an introduction inevitably included no part of the Old Testament; they consisted only of an edition of the Greek New Testament. Marcion did not call it a "New Testament", so far as we know, he may not have given any one title to the edition as a whole. He referred to it as stated above, by the titles which he gave to its two component parts: **Gospel and Apostle. Our main source for information about Marcion's Bible is Tertullian's treatise Against Marcion, written over a half century later (190 A.D.), when Marcion had been dead for some decades. Tertullian's response to Marcion is often hostile yet his factual data appears to be reliable as to what Marcion believed and what Gnostic Christianity taught.**

**Marcion's Gospel** was a collection of writings mainly taken from the "Q" gospel which **later becomes an elongated version of the Gospel of Luke.** We find in 180 C.E. the emergence of the Gospel of Luke in its elongated form in Irenaeus' response to Marcion's First New Testament. Marcion nowhere mentioned Luke's name in connection with his Gospel; it was presented simply as the gospel of Christ. Its text was different from the later Luke: **For example the birth of John the Baptist was absent. Some believe omitted because it implied a connection between "the Christ" and something Jewish that went before Him (remember to create a new religion one must have "the Christ Jesus" not rely on anything in the past, but rather teach everything as if it were new and different).** If we are forced to see "the Christ" quoting other teachers that were his forefathers then it is easy to see that he did not come to bring a new religion as we have incorrectly supposed.

**In Marcion's gospel we find no reference the birth of "the Christ" whom many feel was written later and added subsequent to original New Testament of Marcion.** Of course by now we should know that Gnostic Christianity did not believe in a human "Christ Jesus" but only as a manifestation of God among mankind which was in the "image" and "likeness" of mankind (not actually flesh and blood).

**1 Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (KJV)**

From Paul's own words we see the kingdom that "the Christ" brings with him is not one of "flesh and blood". According to Marcion, who not only used Paul for the majority of his New Testament but also because he believed that only Paul had understood the message of "the Christ" correctly, "the Christ" entered the world not by virgin birth but by a descent as supernatural as was his later ascension.

**Answer for yourself:** Where does Paul teach about the virgin birth or mention any infancy narratives or birth narratives? He does not!

Now pay attention. **The material and doctrines that will be very important to the Roman Catholic Church as they will create a new religion later are not to be found among Marcion's Bible or his Gospel of Christ. This means that either the Roman Catholic Church added the accounts such as the genealogies, the virgin birth narratives, and infancy narratives at a later date and attributed such teachings to the Apostles and or Paul. We know this for a fact for many "key" teachings that would have enhanced Marcion's theological position are simply missing from Marcion earlier collection of the Paul letters but suddenly appear after Irenaeus' 180 A.D. "second New Testament." Of course along with this is the presence of many anti-Gnostic passages that were not in existence in Marcion's First New Testament as well. Marcion would have loved to have used these complementary passages in his debates with the Jews if they had existed when he collected all of Paul's writings (THINK-THINK-THINK)!**

**Answer for yourself:** What were some of the passages not found in Marcion's Gospel which would later show up



in the Roman Catholic version?

- The birth of John the Baptist
- The birth of "the Christ"
- The immersion of "the Christ"
- The Christ's genealogy of Luke 3:23-38
- The temptation narrative of Luke 4:1-13
- "the Christ" preaching at Nazareth in Luke 4:16-30

**Answer for yourself:** It is possible that the text of Luke which Marcion used as the basis for his Gospel was not identical with the text that has come down to us? It seems so!

Scholars often are influenced by the received tradition by Rome and in so doing fail to see what lies before their face. Some say that Marcion's use of what is known today as the later edition of the Gospel of Luke may have been an earlier edition, lacking the first two chapters. Some consider it a "Proto-Luke". But even if the text which lay before Marcion did lack the first two chapters, it began at the latest with Luke 3:1, "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar," and those are the words with which Marcion's Gospel began. But the material which follows immediately was unacceptable to him. The account of John the Baptist's ministry and his baptism of "the Christ" was not in the earliest New Testament of Marcion because such a story implies some continuity between "the Christ" and the old Jewish order. So does the genealogy of Luke 3:23-38, tracing "the Christ"'s ancestry back to Adam through David & Abraham. Of course we know that Gnostics like Marcion did not believe in a flesh and blood "Christ" so we would not expect to find genealogies and we don't find them until 180 C.E. with Irenaeus' refutation of Marcion where Rome had to link "the Christ" with flesh and blood. Thus it must be excluded besides the Gnostic savior is not "born" but descends from Heaven. The temptation narrative (Luke 4:1-13) represents "the Christ" quoting from Deuteronomy three times, as though the Law had authority in his eyes and we have seen Gnostics saw no validity in the Law. We cannot lend any authority to the Old Testament if you are a Marcionite believer. This, for Marcion, was impossible. Surely "the Christ" came to begin a new thing; a new Religion! Surely, as Marcion would have us believe, "the Christ" did no longer consider Deuteronomy as a necessary Scripture. Equally impossible for Marcion, was the idea that "the Christ", preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), should have claimed that his ministry was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. So, having begun his edition of the Gospel with Luke 3:1, Marcion went straight on to Luke 4:31 and continued: "the Christ" came down [descended from Heaven] to Capernaum" as though he came down there and then from heaven, fully grown.

In place of "Thy Kingdom come" in his version of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2), Marcion's Gospel had the interesting variation: *"Let thy Holy Spirit come on us and cleanse us."*

**Answer for yourself:** What is another name by which the Holy Spirit was known? Yep, you guessed it..."the Sophia"; the feminine aspect of God.

It is interesting that this *"Let thy Holy Spirit come on us and cleanse us"* found its way into the textual tradition of "orthodox" Christians for it is cited by the church father Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus of Turin, and is the reading on one or two Greek manuscripts of the gospels.

The "old is good" (Luke 5:39) is omitted because it might be taken to imply approval of the Old Testament order and the religion of "the Christ". Possibly "the Christ" did not come to replace Judaism with Christianity! Marcion could not entertain such an idea. The reference to "the Christ's" mother and brothers could not be retained in Luke 8:19. For Marcion "the Christ" could not belong to any human family). It had to go. There are other peculiarities of Marcion's Gospel which can be explained with equal ease. It is simple: Marcion believed "the Christ" was come to bring a replacement faith to Israel and anything that would show otherwise must be stricken from the record! Most Protestant and

**Catholic churches of today have been so influenced by Marcion that they ascribe to his basic premises! Such a shame.**

*Be that as it may let us not lose sight of just whom "the Christ" was for Marcion and Paul since having grown up today with an understanding of "the Christ" as a literal flesh and blood being whom Paul and Marcion never believed in the first place.*

## MARCION'S APOSTLE

Marcion's "**The Apostle**" was an edition of ten letters of Paul. The three Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) were not included because they would only later be written to combat the First New Testament and Paul's teaching of the "Gnostic Christ". **The Chester Beatty codex (P46) of Paul's letters also does not include the same books.** Also in Marcion "Apostle" the two letters to the Corinthians are combined as well as the letters to Thessalonica.

**Now pay attention. The Marcionite order of Paul's letters is given below:**

1. **Galatians**
2. **Corinthians**
3. **Romans**
4. **Thessalonians**
5. **Laodiceans (Ephesians)**
6. **Colossians**
7. **Philippians**
8. **Philemon**

**Notice the order of these letters in the Roman Catholic Church's Bible By Irenaeus in 180 C.E.**

1. **Romans**
2. **Corinthians**
3. **Galatians**
4. **Ephesians**
5. **Philippians**
6. **Colossians**
7. **Thessalonians**
8. **1 & 2 Timothy (not in Marcion's Bible)**
9. **Titus (not in Marcion's Bible)**
10. **Philemon.**

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that the book of Romans was placed first in the canon of the Roman Catholic Church?

**Answer for yourself:** Why did those who collected Marcion's documents change the order of his "New Testament" and place the book of Romans first following the gospels? Is this an attempt to make sure that you are indoctrinated with Roman as the authority for the emerging Christian faith?

## ROME HAS TO ESTABLISH AUTHORITY FOR THE CHANGING OF THE FAITH OF YESHUA

**The Roman Church had to justify the shift in authority from Jerusalem to Rome and what better way to show it than let the book of Romans appear "first" as the first and trend-setting epistle in the New**



**Testament. Also they added books which were not in Marcion's First New Testament.**

**Answer for yourself:** Why? Or, did Marcion omit these books?

**Answer for yourself:** Who would benefit the most from the adding of these other books at 180 C.E.?

**At the beginning of his Apostle Marcion placed the letter to the Galatians in first position. This was to dramatize the differences & opposites between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles. To Marcion the letter (Galatians) mounted a direct attack on the Jerusalem apostles, for it was at their instance (and rightly so), or at least by their agents, that attempts were being made to win Paul's Gentile converts in Galatia over to a Judaistic form of Christianity. Marcion considered this heresy. God did not!** The remaining letters of Marcion's canon were arranged in descending order of length, the two letters of Corinthians being reckoned together as one composite letter and the two letter to the Thessalonians being treated in the same way.

You might be surprised to know, and we will look at this later, but in the collection of Paul's Galatians letter what we have come to see as the most "Law hating" treatise in the whole of the New Testament was completely lacking in Marcion's collection of his First New Testament. Marcion, since being anti-Law in the first place has no reason to remove such propaganda since it served his religious belief system but yet we don't find it in the earliest collection of Galatians by Paul.

**Answer for yourself:** Was this missing chapter 3 of Galatians later written by proto-Roman Catholics like Irenaeus who were also against the Torah and advocated the replacement religion of Rome over the faith of the Jerusalem church? It would sure appear to be. Take time to read chapter 3 of Galatians and pay attention to what it really says and understand that it does not appear until 180 C.E.

**Answer for yourself:** What are we to do with an unreliable New Testament which denies the Torah and Judaism and the Laws of Noah which are the foundation of the Gentiles' Covenant with God?

Now for the most startling information concerning Marcion. **Marcion's edition of Romans lacked Romans 1:19-2:1; 3:21-4:25; and all of Romans 9-11 except Romans 10:1-4 and 11:33-36, not counting everything after Romans 14:23.**

**Now for a land mine! Notice conspicuously absent is Rom. 10:9-10 which states that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord "the Christ", and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation".**

**Answer for yourself:** Why would not Marcion have included such a "Pauline Dogma" since he was pro-Pauline himself and this would have benefited Marcion in his debates with the Jews if it had existed in his day? He would have "if" it had existed in his day!

**The answer is simple. The text in question was not given as inspired by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and is not part of the original Gospel of "the Christ". It was written and added after Marcion and was not part of the Gospel or included in any Gospel writing as late as 140 years after "the Christ".**

**Answer for yourself:** Did you hear what I said?

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you think it is about time you began to study to see what kind of religion you practice; the religion according to the teachings of "the Christ" or according to the teachings of men? It is time to find our just who "the Christ" is as taught and believed in not only by the Ancients but the early "Gnostic Christians".

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Galatians chapter 3, the greatest "anti-Law" treatise in the New Testament, was almost wholly lacking in Marcion's first New Testament? Could this mean it was written much later and added to the New Testament after 180 A.D. and given Pauline authority and authorship? It sure does for Marcion would have again loved to have used this part of Paul's writings if it had existed when he collected all of Paul's letters.

**Answer for yourself:** Who is putting this Bible together we carry today?

**Answer for yourself:** Can we be sure such doctrines we trust today for salvation are what the earliest Church really believed?

## **SALVATION CONSISTS OF BOTH OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW (TORAH/COMMANDMENTS); NOT JUST GRACE ALONE**

Because of Marcion and men like him we have **two competing Gospels today**. To Marcion the "God who created all things" had nothing to do with the gospel; he was a different being from the God and Father of "the Christ". In this we see Marcion's rejection of all the Old Testament (the Bible of the Jerusalem church. To what extent Marcion's text differed from the one he had inherited and used for the basis of his gospel is not easily discerned. Suffice to say Marcion "dejudiazed" the Scriptures and destroyed the Hebrew roots of the early faith. What is problematic, as said before, is the absence in Marcion's Canon of many texts recognized as "Pauline" by today's scholars, but which would most assuredly would have been included by Marcion if they had existed in his day (Rom. 10: 9-10).

**Answer for yourself:** What does that say for our "quick altar prayers" by which we give false security to repentant sinners who "repeat after me" as we have them pray Rom. 10:9-10 as the "sinner's prayer" and who we never see again?

The failure to be found in Marcion's First New Testament the many passages we accept today as "inspired New Testament Scriptures" by our churches can only mean one thing: they did not exist 140 years after "the Christ"! Thus, many additions to the "inspired and infallible" Word of God would be added by Roman Catholics who followed and refuted Marcion's understanding of "the Christ" as well as his First New Testament with one of their own making. Thus, these proto-Catholics like Irenaeus would counter Marcion with their "own Bible" to counteract his Bible:

- They would write their own authority (Catholic) into the Bible (rework Marcion's Bible) to replace the authority of Jerusalem with the authority of Rome.
- The authority of Jerusalem was written out of the New Testament and replaced with the authority of Rome.
- The Catholic Church replaced the Jewish Synagogue. The Pagan Holidays replaced the Lord's Holy Days.
- Sunday replaced the Sabbath.
- Tithing to an "organization" or a "building" replaced "righteous giving to the needy." The Temple tax to support the "organization" (Temple) was replaced by robbing the saints of God's provision to them as distributed in the "poor tithe".
- The Noachide Laws for Gentile acceptance into Israel was replaced with Church Dogma of Augustine and Constantine. Martin Luther would shortly follow.
- The Lord's Supper was replaced with "Sunday cups and crackers".
- The Passover was replaced with Easter (fornication festival).

**Need I go on, because it does not stop here!**



## IN SUMMARY

- Luke 1:1 thorough 2:52 Does not contain the introduction or the story of "the Christ"'s birth.
- Luke 5:39 Does not contain the phrase "The old is better"...it was added later.
- Luke 8:19 Makes no reference to the Christ's mother and brothers.
- Luke 11:2 Adds "Let thy Holy Spirit come on us & cleans us".
- Luke 19:9 Does not contain the phrase "because he is the son of Abraham.
- Rom. 1:19-2:1 Does not contain the reasons for and the results of Gentile guilt and sin.
- Rom. 3:21-4:25 Does not contain section on righteousness and acceptance by God of both Jew and Gentile based on faith and obedience.
- Rom. 9-11 All omitted except for 10:1-4 where we see an unbalanced picture of Christ ending all law and 11:33-36. We have a distorted view of Jew & Gentile in God's purpose.
- Everything after Rom. 14:23 is omitted.
- Omission of foundational faith text of Rom. 10:9-10.
- Omitted is Gal. 1:18-24 where we have Paul's account of his visit to Peter and the Jerusalem church for acceptance
- Omitted is Gal. 2:6-9 where we find the slander of the Jerusalem apostles
- Omitted is all of Galatians chapter 3 which is the greatest anti-Law treatise in the New Testament

Each of the above differences need to be studied to determine how these passages were added later in Rome's refutation of Marcion's Bible & why they were not included if they had existed since they bolstered Marcion's theological stance against the Jews. Any thinking believer will quickly see once he encounters the facts that much of what we have come to accept today in the New Testament were later theological additions that served Rome's interests.

Marcion's Bible is of great significance to every modern Christian, because the power and authority of the many different Christian religions and denominations (over 2000) have been created from the words of the New Testament and not from the Old Testament, which was originally the authority for the followers of "the Christ" for over 200 years.

**Answer for yourself:** Now that you know this, do you ever wonder what was added to Marcion's First New Testament by later proto-Catholics and Catholic documents which comprise the New Testament which neither "the Christ" or the earliest Jewish followers of "the Christ", those who knew him best, could not accept nor follow?

I hope you share this article with your friends and family and provoke them to deep thought as we study to reclaim the real faith of saints. Shalom

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## WERE THE 4 GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY AS WE ARE LED TO BELIEVE TODAY?

A remarkable number of ancient gospels not included in the New Testament have been recovered during the past two centuries. In evaluating these gospels, scholars have come to astonishingly different conclusions about when they were written. Some scholars have assigned many of the newly recovered gospels to the first century of the Christian movement. Others have concluded that virtually all of these gospels were written during the middle or late second century. This is very important to our study concerning the fact that we have grown up in Western Christianity being told that our current 4 gospels were written early; Mark or example being written before 70 A.D. and the destruction of the Temple and the others no later than 90 A.D. or thereabouts. Such early dating makes a strong case for the reliability of the information contained within them concerning the Jesus of the New Testament. "Early is best" is something I remember about Seminary and this the motto we go by when studying manuscript evidences.

**Answer for yourself:** But what if the 4 gospels we have in our possession today which church tradition has assured us were "written early" were really not written early but rather late? Would this fact, if it can be proven, render these 4 Gospel accounts less than reliable especially in light of the discover of earlier Gnostic gospels in this last century? Could these newly discovered Gnostic gospels give us a more true picture of what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" than the orthodox 4 gospels in our current New Testaments?

Well trust me on this that there is no scholarly consensus regarding the dates of our 4 gospels nor these newly discovered Gnostic gospels and a consensus of opinion does not seem likely anytime in the foreseeable future. Although there has been such vigorous debate about the dates of gospel origins, I maintain that if we examine the scholarly evidence available to us to and use the minds God gave us then we can come to a reliably correct understanding concerning the dates that these 4 gospels were written which are in our current New Testaments today as that is the focus of this article.

**Evidence is required to establish that a gospel was written early. Not possessing the original autographs and the dates that they were written we are left with determining the approximate dating of our 4 orthodox gospels by noting when they were explicitly mentioned in the works of an author who commenced his or her writing activities before the close of the second century. We call these men "Apostolic Fathers".**

While some extraordinary claims have been made about precisely when early gospels (and parts of them) were written by Christians down through history and the introductory notes of our Bibles today, it is impossible to determine the dates of gospel origins with much certainty. We can only look at when we find mention of them by other authors and use the dating of these references as a guide in determining the best time when they possibly could be written. Although this is not as accurate as we would like it shines great light on the possible dating of these 4 gospels. **This is made all the more important when we find upon serious study that there is not one explicit reference to these 4 gospels until late in the Second Century by any Apostolic Father of the Church!** An absolute date can be assigned to an ancient text



only if a clear relationship can be established between the text and another writing or event from a specific, known time. Unfortunately, such writings and events are almost entirely lacking from the time period when Christian tradition tells us these 4 gospels were written but this is not the case a century later when we find their first explicit mention towards the end of the Second century. Problematic for me and it should be for you is the fact that when we examine the writings left to us by these Apostolic Fathers we find no explicit reference to our 4 gospels in the early Second century when we examine the earliest writings left to us by these Apostolic Fathers.

The typical Christian position is that the only extant gospels that **may** date to the first century are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Thomas. Typical Christian scholarship tells us that only two known events are helpful for determining how soon early gospels may have been written after the death of Jesus: the fall of Jerusalem (70 C.E.) and the martyrdom of Peter (ca. 64 C.E.). Yet, these events are useful for dating only two gospels and a portion of a third. The Gospel of Matthew and Luke must have been written **after** Titus' siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. because they allude to it (Matt 22:7; Luke 19:43-44, 21:20-24), but it is not clear that Mark was aware of the event and we are led to believe that it was the earliest written of them all and this "assumption" is problematic by the same reasoning. John 21 must have been written after Peter's death, but the final chapter may have been added to the gospel long after the rest had been written. To make matters worse there are no certain references to any datable historical events in John 1-20. **Certainly, all of the 4 traditional gospels were completed before the end of the second century, but how much earlier is unclear.** On the basis of manuscript evidence alone, it is only possible to determine that only one of our 4 traditional gospels was in circulation before the middle of the second century; that being the one canonical gospel of John..

All additional information about which gospels were in use by the early decades of the second century comes from **ambiguous patristic testimonies**. There are two writers who at first glance **appear** to be potentially useful for determining which (canonical) gospels were in circulation by the **early second century**. **First, it appears possible that Ignatius of Antioch was familiar with Matthew when he wrote his letters around 110 C.E. but as we will see when we examine his letters in detail that such is not the case!** In various passages, Ignatius **seems to allude** to the gospel of Matthew, **although he does not mention it explicitly**. Most of these passages, however, are vague references at best and could easily be the result of oral tradition which today we understand comes from the circulation of oral tradition concerning "the Christ". Also, careful examination of the Matthew-Ignatius parallels reveals an interesting trend. Ignatius has an overwhelming preference for material found in Matthew, but not the other synoptics. **The use or consistent reference to only one of the four gospels would seem strange had all 4 of the gospels existed in his day.** This excessive familiarity with special "M" material has suggested to some that Ignatius may have known a source of Matthew rather than the gospel itself but again this is nothing more than an assumption. **So when we examine Ignatius letters we find that Ignatius is only referring to what he has "heard" and not to existing written documents existing in his day.**

Now we have a more difficult problem when we look at Papias of Hierapolis who is said to mention writings by Matthew and Mark in his five volume **Oracles of the Lord Explained** around **130 C.E.** The problem is that Papias' comments, known only second-hand through Eusebius, are not at all clear. **His brief description of a writing of Matthew as the "logia" in the Hebrew is too vague to be a certain reference to the canonical text** (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.39.16). In fact this "logia", which was written in Hebrew, is believed by scholars to be not the existing Gospel of Matthew we have today which is written in Greek and shows a Greek syntax but rather a completely different written source of the teachings of "the Christ" than what we have received in our New Testaments today. **Further ambiguity surrounds Papias' comments about Mark. Papias states only that Mark wrote down notes of Peter's preaching (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.39.15) but does not call this one of the 4 gospels. Yet, it is difficult to believe that so carefully constructed a narrative as Mark could have been regarded as a mere chaotic collection of unordered notes. Further, as alluded to above, Papias does not actually state that these notes were the canonical gospel (nor does Eusebius imply that he did). Thus, it is not certain that Papias was describing either canonical**



## Matthew or Mark in the excerpts of Eusebius.

**Answer for yourself:** So what can we learn from this?

***All early gospels, then, were written sometime between the death of Jesus and the second half of the second century when we find the first explicit reference by Christian writers in 180 C.E.***

The gospels must have been written after 70 C.E.; how long after is anybody's guess.

So let it be said in all honesty in spite of what other Christian "scholars" propose: we get really no help in determining the date for the writing of the gospels from either the reference or the omission of the destruction of the Temple in these 4 gospels nor from the accounts of Ignatius or Papias. Any dating of these 4 gospels by association with the destruction of the Temple and slight references to it is pure "assumption". It can be honestly said that if we rely on ambiguous accounts of Ignatius or Papias in determining the date for the writings of these 4 gospels we have fallen back upon "assumption" once again. **But that is not the case when we look for "quotations" from these 4 gospels in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Absent from the earliest Apostolic Fathers might be explicit references to these 4 gospels but that is not the case when we get to the later half of the Second Century!**

It was Irenaeus who created a broad consensus that only four individual gospels could be regarded as authoritative scripture (ca. 180 C.E.). While the earliest known list of the New Testament as it now stands in modern Bibles was not written until 367 C.E., the central role of the four gospels was never seriously challenged **after the time of Irenaeus** (ca. 180 C.E.).

**Answer for yourself:** How likely is it that these 4 gospels existed and their importance realized by Christianity yet no explicit reference to them by name is made by any Apostolic Father until after 180 C.E. when we find the first explicit reference to them by Irenaeus?

## **WHAT CAME FIRST...ORAL OR WRITTEN TRADITION?**

**Answer for yourself:** When you are in a class and take "notes" don't you hear before you write? Sure we do.

All early gospels have a common background. They come from an age when traditions about Jesus had not yet been fixed. These "Jesus traditions" were oral before they were written. **Most these traditions, in fact, were still being circulated orally.** In the unwritten tradition (oral traditions that varied in different localities), various narratives about Jesus were being recounted along with parables and teachings attributed to him (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.9.11). The oral traditions were so abundant that, as one ancient writer put it, every one of them were written down, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:25). **All early gospels underwent a similar process of formation.** Probably over considerable periods of time, the writers of the "Jesus traditions" (called evangelists) molded their gospels into their final forms by adapting traditional materials from various oral and written sources. **Although so few Christian writings have survived from this time period, nothing is more certain than that traditions about Jesus were subject to constant revision.** The lists of Jesus' teachings that circulated during this time period were revised easily and often. Narratives gospels also were frequently, thoroughly reworked. Consider Mark. The material in this gospel was placed in at least seven radically different arrangements. **All early gospels also share at least one more additional common characteristic: their reason for being written.** By creating a gospel, every ancient author was trying to present his or her beliefs about Christ Jesus in a way that would be helpful to his followers after the end of his physical life. **The gospel writers first drew on oral traditions** that, to the modern mind, seem to be of doubtful worth. They modified material in a way that we would regard as unjustified. Yet always, for each evangelist, the underlying motivation for writing was the same.



## WHAT IS "Q"? HAS "Q" BEEN MISTAKEN FOR THE WRITTEN GOSPELS?

Scholars "assume" that there existed an earlier body of oral and later written traditions of the teachings of Jesus over and above our 4 accepted gospels of today. If the Gospel of Q exists, it might best be regarded as a reconstructed pre-Christian Gospel which is believed by many to have been first circulated as an accepted oral tradition of the teachings of "the Christ" which was later written down. In its written later form it comes into existence much earlier than the four New Testament gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John). If this theory is correct, then Q is an extremely important piece of literature. It may contain the earliest descriptions of beliefs, behaviors and expectations of one group of Jesus' followers. Christians have realized for centuries that the gospels Luke and Matthew have many points of similarity. But it was not until 150 years ago that they started to examine these correspondences in detail. It is important to realize that verses from the synoptic gospels are not merely similar. One would expect that three different authors' writings would be similar. It would not matter whether they were eye-witnesses to Jesus ministry (as religious conservatives believe) or whether they wrote many decades after Jesus' execution and based their writing on common oral traditions. But the correspondences go further than that. In hundreds of cases, the wording is identical, not merely similar. Theologians have not reached a consensus about whether the Gospel of Q exists, and about the interdependence of the four canonical gospels. Many theories have been put forth but our purpose in mentioning "Q" is to bring to light the importance of an "oral tradition" concerning the teachings of "the Christ" that was not only circulated but often committed to memory by followers of "the Christ". This "memorized oral tradition of Jesus' sayings" finds its importance when we look at the ambiguous references to sayings of "the Christ" by early Apostolic Fathers which are "not explicit quotes" of Gospel Scripture but are often related or similar to passages we find later in the 4 gospels when they are later written!

**Answer for yourself:** It is possible that these early Apostolic Fathers mention in their writings various sayings of "the Christ" that they had learned from oral tradition and held in their memory; sayings that they had only previously heard but never read in a written form because in their day no written Gospel containing these oral traditions were written down as of yet? Could this possibly be the reason why there is no explicit mention of the 4 gospels by name or quotes from them by name until we arrive at 180 C.E. which would indicate to us a late date for these 4 gospels rather than an early date? You bet it is.

## EARLY CITATIONS OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Besides the books of the New Testament, six other Christian writings from the period before A.D. 125 have survived. These writings are known as the works of the Apostolic Fathers.

All of these contain **allusions** to Jesus' life and teaching. In some instances, the allusion shows that the author was familiar with the gospels as we have them today. The question we have to answer here is if this "allusion" to the life of Jesus comes from existing written sources or from an oral tradition.

**Answer for yourself:** How can we tell the difference?

We shall see upon more study of the testimonies of these Apostolic Fathers that the allusion seemingly depends not on the existence of written gospels in their day but on oral tradition—that is, on personal recollections of what Jesus or his apostles had taught which they had only "heard" and never read in the 4 gospels we have today. Yet even the allusions that may be based on oral tradition do not contradict the Gospel record. Thus, the works of the Apostolic Fathers are doubly potent for authenticating

the gospels.

I will examine in the next series of articles each of these men and their writings as we try to ascertain whether they had existing 4 gospels in their day as we have been taught today or if they make only allusions to what they had previously heard. As you can see the importance of "Q" is immense as it can expel any doubt regarding the existence of or the lack of the existence of the 4 gospels existing early which we are told today were written early.

The Epistle of Polycarp. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, wrote this epistle to the Philippians in approximately 120. He makes no quotes from the existing gospels but only makes about 60 references to sayings of "the Christ" which we will later find recorded in the New Testament but at no time does he mention a Gospel by name.

The Epistles of Ignatius. In approximately 115, as Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, journeyed to a martyr's death in Rome, he wrote the seven short letters now known as his *Epistles*. These contain inexact references to later passages we will find recorded in the Gospel record of Matthew, Luke, and John.

The Shepherd of Hermas. As edifying reading, *The Shepherd* is much inferior to the other noncanonical early Christian writings. The author, one Hermas, recalls a series of peculiar visions that he imagines were divine in origin. The work has been dated by some in the 90s, by others in the middle of the second century. Robinson puts it at 85. The work does not quote directly from the New Testament, but presupposes the existence of a Roman church presided over by elders.

The Epistle of Barnabas. The author of this lengthy epistle identifies himself simply as "one of yourselves". Although he quotes extensively from the Old Testament, he refers to the New Testament only once, when he references only one saying of Jesus. Yet he does clearly set forth Christian doctrine. Since the author is aware of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, but is ignorant of the Jewish rebellion in 132, scholars agree that the epistle was written between these limits. The date commonly assigned to it is 130, but J. B. Lightfoot, the scholar responsible for the standard edition of the work, placed the epistle earlier, between 70 and 80. Recently, Robinson urged a date of about 75.

1 Clement. Clement was a bishop of Rome during the closing years of the first century. Most scholars have decided that this letter to the church at Corinth was written in about 95, but Robinson, following G. Edmundson, argues that the correct date is probably about A.D. 70. The letter contains a number of remarks strongly reminiscent of the synoptic gospels but again quotes no New Testament text as we find in the later New Testament nor does he mention a Gospel by name.

The Didache, or Teaching of the Apostles. The *Didache* is an early manual for the churches. In its treatment of ordinances, procedures, and ethical questions, the work has an obvious Jewish flavor. The regulations that it proposes for fasting strike us today as legalistic. The work is especially important as evidence that the early church practiced immersion and opposed abortion. The dates assigned to the work spread over a wide range, from the middle of the first century to the fourth century A.D. But the obviously primitive character of the church mirrored in its exhortations has convinced many scholars to accept an early date, among them both Lightfoot and Robinson. Robinson argues, but assumes, that the *Didache* was written at Antioch between 40 and 60. The work contains numerous quotations of Jesus, especially from His Sermon on the Mount.

Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr, who lived in the first half of the second century, testifies in *The First Apology* that the common worship of the church in his day centered on readings from the prophets and "memoirs of the apostles".

**Answer for yourself:** Since we know that there existed for a fact many gospels written in the names of the Apostles, known as the Gnostic gospels, other than the traditional 4 gospels we have today, then can we say for certain that these "memoirs of the apostles" referred to the 4 gospels we have today not possible to these others "non canonical" gospels? No. We again are left with only an "assumption".



Elsewhere in the same work, he says that these memoirs were also called "gospels". **Justin Martyr does not quote by name from any New Testament writings. He does use the formulae of quotation 'it is recorded' and 'it is written', when quoting from the 'Memoirs of the apostles' or simply the 'Memoirs'. These 'Memoirs', Justin tells his non-Christian readers, were called the 'gospels'.** He mentions that in Sunday services of worship, "the Memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets [from the Old Testament] are read, for as long as time permits."

**Answer for yourself:** Can we be sure that these "Memoirs of the apostles" are our 4 gospels today? No we cannot. I have examined these supposed quotations used by Justin and they are simply not what you would call "quotations" but rather crude references to "sayings" attributed to "the Christ" like we find above. It is not a stretch of the imagination to say that again Justin is referring to an oral tradition that was circulating from many different areas concerning supposed sayings of "the Christ" when he references such teachings of "the Christ". In all of Justin's writings we find just "one" clear allusion to the Revelation of John and again this can be but a stroke of luck as we find but one "oral tradition" that is later committed to writing exactly and this we find in the Revelation of John only!

The first harmony of the four gospels appeared in about 170, when Tatian, a leader of the church in Assyria, composed his *Diatessaron* ("through four"). At about the same time, an unknown author compiled a list of New Testament books that has partially survived in the mutilated manuscript known as the Muratorian Fragment. The opening portion of the list is now lost, but the first words of the fragment, which apparently concern Mark, suggest that Mark was the previous entry. The next entries are Luke, explicitly identified as the third Gospel, and John. Irenaeus, writing before A.D. 200, names all four gospels in the familiar order "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," saying that this is the order in which they were written. It appears incontestable that by the middle of the second century, the gospels were well known as a collection of four books in the order and under the names they retain today.

**Answer for yourself:** Should this not be very problematic for us and should indicate an early date for the Gospel of Matthew? No. Then why not? When one undertakes a through study of Judaism and the Sermon on the Mount we find that each of the teachings in this great Sermon on the Mount attributed to Jesus had been taught before by a host of other Rabbis long before the birth of Jesus. Rabbis often used a Rabbinical method of teaching called Remez where they alluded back or "hinted" back at what already had been said. We find the each of these "themes" in the Sermon on the Mount was not new material to Jesus' hearers; in fact Jesus was only reiterating what they already had heard and known from prior teachings in the Synagogues for hundreds of years in Israel. Nothing in the Sermon on the Mount was "new" or "unique" but old hat so to speak. It was an exhortation to do what they already knew to do. **So we find that these "quotes" in the Didache to have originated in the beginning with Rabbinical oral tradition that long preceded Jesus. Nearly all of these quotations in the Didache are closely parallel to passages in the Gospel of Matthew because Rabbis had taught these same concepts and not only they but their "hearers" committed to memory these same "supposed quotes" long before Jesus.**

So we will take each of these early Apostolic writings and examine these to see if we can find the necessary evidence to prove the 4 gospels were written early as our Bibles and Church tradition maintain.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is the dating of these 4 gospels so very important? Ever heard of Gnosticism?

Well modern scholarship today has burst the bubble on Catholic Church Tradition with the aid of archeology. We know today that these 4 gospels were not written early and in their place there existed a whole host of earlier Christian writings that reveal to us a more accurate understanding of "the Christ", "Jesus", and "Christ Jesus" and the true message of "the Christ" than what we have been given by the antisemitic Catholic Church and the Apostolic Fathers. **What we have been told was "early" written documentation in our 4 gospels was really written rather late as a refutation of what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ". The deceptions we find when we look at the original sources is almost beyond believability.** The seriousness of this should hit home once the stark reality becomes apparent: we have not been told the

were the 4 gospels written early as we are led to believe today?

truth about the New Testament and often these later "replacement" writings of Rome have not only covered up the truths regarding what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" but in its place we have been given supposed teachings of Jesus which are anything but that. The truth that you will come to see if you can ever look past the lies of Christian history is that these early Apostolic Fathers had no 4 gospels until the later part of the Second Century. The First New Testament which was thoroughly Gnostic in "theology" was reworked by men like Irenaeus and others and this explains why we find no explicit reference to quotes from the New Testament in the earlier Apostolic Fathers but just ambiguous references to an oral tradition or the mention of any of the 4 gospels by name. We see for a fact that in place of the Gnostic gospels of the earliest Christians which these early Church Fathers hated and burned out of existence over the first 4-5 centuries of the "imitation Church" we are given a lying tradition that the 4 gospels were "early" when in fact just the opposite was true.

We need to settle this once and for all and we can look to Bruce Metzger, a distinguished Christian scholar who will tell us the truth about the Canon of the New Testament when others either will not or simply do not know and only "parrot" what they have been told in church or traditional Bible schools. Bruce Metzger is one of the editors of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. Bruce Manning Metzger is George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary, and he serves on the board of the American Bible Society. In his The Canon of the New Testament Bruce Metzger tells the truth concerning the early Apostolic Fathers and just what they alluded to and what they did not in referencing "sayings" of "the Christ". He tells us that what they refer to is but "oral tradition" and that we cannot say for sure that they are referencing the existing 4 gospels that we have today. We will tackle what the evidence shows in the next series of articles when we see for certain if our early Church Fathers had in their possession the 4 gospels or if they did not!

**Answer for yourself:** If the Gnostic gospels can be shown to be a more reliable picture and presentation of "the Christ" and his sayings than these "forged" 4 gospels we have today which we are led to believe were written by the Apostles when they were not but by antisemitic Church Fathers then should we not maybe become acquainted with them before we spend another minute reading what is not true?





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY? WHAT IS THE GOSPEL TRUTH?

Over the years my studies into the New Testament has revealed not only very interesting material and knowledge but often led into very controversial areas. Just last night I received an email from a very zealous young Christian who maintains that I am wrong in my stance that the Gospels were written rather late; namely in the later part of the second century and possibly the early third century. I understand why this is often hard to hear or even deal with because written into the "notes" and "book descriptions" of our Christian Bibles is often "commentary" which promotes an early date for the writing of these 4 Gospels. This gentleman who e-mailed me maintains that in his Christian Bible the introductory notes to each of the 4 Gospels state that they were written early and then he goes on to mention the stance held by two prominent Christian scholars that stated in the last ten years that we have conclusive proof that the Gospels were written early. By this he is referring to primarily two things:

- Dr. Carsten Thiede statements that we have "eyewitness records of the life of Christ" which refers to three papyrus fragments of Matthew's Gospel which he believes came from the mid-first century. In 1994 *Times* magazine ran a front-page story entitled, 'Oxford papyrus is "eyewitness record of the life of Christ".' The article reported the claim by the German scholar, Dr Carsten Thiede, that three papyrus fragments of Matthew's Gospel held in Magdalen College Oxford library since 1901 date from the mid-first century, within twenty years or so of the life of Jesus. 'Not since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947', the story continued, 'has there been such a potentially important breakthrough in biblical scholarship.' *The Times* devoted nearly two full pages to Carsten Thiede's claims, including an editorial which likened the alleged new discovery not only to the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but also to Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's treasures in 1922, and to Schliemann's location of Troy. On 26 December *The Times* carried an extended interview with Dr Thiede, thereby giving still more oxygen to his claims about three tiny papyrus fragments of Matthew's Gospel.
- He also made reference to the Spanish papyrologist Jose O'Callaghan statements who maintains that we have a portion of Mark's Gospel which was found at Qumran which had to date prior to 68 C.E. when Rome destroyed the Qumran community. On 16 March 1972 *The Times* reported the claim by the Spanish papyrologist José O'Callaghan that a papyrus fragment in Greek from Cave 7 at Qumran (7Q5) was part of Mark 6: 52-3. According to *The Times*, part of Mark's Gospel had allegedly turned up in the most surprising place of all: not in Rome, where most scholars thought it was written, but in a cave very close to the sectarian Jewish community at Qumran, near the Dead Sea. And since the scroll was hidden before the Roman Tenth Legion marched through the area in AD 68, Mark's Gospel must have been written earlier than most scholars had supposed. Many widely held views about earliest Christianity would have to be reconsidered.

**Answer for yourself:** Are these Christian Scholars correct in their assessment or is there evidence proving otherwise which they like many other so-called "Christian Scholars" will not consider or desire not to consider when making their pronouncements which reinforce the Catholic Church Tradition concerning the early date of the writing of these 4 Gospels?

**If these statements by Dr. Thiede and O'Callaghan are true then this would be a startling revelation of the early date for the Gospels.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are these two above statement true as made by Thiede and O'Callaghan? Are they but more Christian sensationalism and distortion of the facts? Is this "Selective Scholarship" at best? Do we really have "**eyewitness**" testimony concerning Jesus Christ? Do we actually have Gospel fragments from the first century? Can both of these statements be corroborated as fact? Do we truly have eyewitness evidence of Jesus Christ and the Gospels from the mid-first century?

Most can agree with me that *The Times* has rarely indulged in sensationalist reporting and that being the case you can expect that many, many readers assumed that genuinely new evidence has been found for the early dating of the Gospels. For after all it was *The Times* said that we had eyewitness testimony to the reliability of the Gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Has a fragment of a very early *Christian* writing been found in the library of a conservative *Jewish* community?

So two intriguing stories about the origin of the Gospels are running in tandem. Papyrus fragments of parts of Matthew 26 and a papyrus fragment from a Dead Sea Scroll alleged to contain part of Mark 6 are both said to date from the first century, and thus underpin the reliability of the Gospels. If either of the new claims turns out to be correct, parts of the history of earliest Christianity will have to be rewritten from top to tail.

**Make no mistake about it. The stakes are high and the credibility of not only the Gospels but the whole New Testament as well as the Christian faith is at stake and under scrutiny because of these recent "scholarly statements". The Gospels are the foundation documents of Christianity. For Christians there is a great deal at stake when the Gospels are put under the scholar's microscope.**

**Answer for yourself:** Were these Gospels written in the first century by eyewitnesses as church tradition maintains? Did the apostles actually write these Gospels in the first century? Do these Gospels contain 'Gospel truth'? In the light of modern scholarship, what do we know, or can know, about the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth? Just who is this "Jesus Christ" we find in the Gospels; especially in light that the Jewish scholars maintain that this New Testament character is not their Jewish Messiah nor actually fulfilled the necessary Messianic prophecies to be considered their Messiah?

**Please pay attention. The right wing of contemporary Christianity (either Roman Catholic or Protestant) maintain that 'the truth of the Gospel' hangs on the historical reliability of **every single word** of all four Gospels. Understand that this New Testament has been presented to us as the "infallible, inerrant, and inspired living Word of God". If that is the case then it should be able to hold up to intense scrutiny and examination of the claims that are made for it as well as the claims the texts make for themselves.** Accordingly, interest in the new claims about the fragments of Matthew and Mark has been high as it is hoped that this supposed "discovery of first century fragments of the Gospels" will validate the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth when critical evidence exists outside this "one book..the Christian New Testament" proves otherwise. On the radical left, some scholars insist that recent research has undermined the 'truth' of the Gospels: as products of the early church. They point to all the discrepancies and purposeful misquotation from the Hebrew Scriptures and the parallels to the lives of the Sun-gods and Sun-godmen as replayed throughout the life of the New Testament Jesus Christ and they conclude, in my opinion, that the New Testament tell us next to nothing about Jesus of Nazareth. Outside of the parables in Luke and a few other places in the New Testament the "Jesus Jesus" is hard to locate but we have no problem identifying in the Jesus Christ depicted in the New Testament the conglomeration into one of all of the myths and legends of the prior Sun-gods. The earliest Christians, we are told, held such widely diverging views about the significance of Jesus that we have to talk about a multiplicity of various sects of 'Christianities'. They point to the newly discovered existence of the Gnostic Gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls barely fifty years ago as proof which had laid hidden for almost 2000 yrs without the tampering of mankind or the inclusion of "creative theology" as



developed down through Catholic Church History. They arguments and presentation of factual data is not only alarming to the traditional Christian but difficult if not impossible to refute.

## LET US THINK

These series of articles concerning the possible late date for the writing of these Gospels is intended to provoke your reflection on a set of questions.

**Answer for yourself:** In the light of recent discoveries and modern scholarship, how much 'truth' do the Gospels contain?

**Answer for yourself:** Is what we read in the New Testament meant to be understood as "Literal Gospel Truth" or could it possibly be that much of what we read was understood only "Allegorically" by the earliest Christian believers and only later "Literalized" by the Roman Catholic Church and the Early Church Fathers?

**Answer for yourself:** What can the historian say about the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth?

Questions of this kind have been asked by critical thinkers only since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The father of modern historical inquiry into the Gospels is H.S. Reimarus. Reimarus, one of many German thinkers who were in the forefront of this "enlightened" approach to the Christian faith, wondered if the Church had placed a wrong emphasis on the person of Jesus. He thought that Jesus may have been a simple religious teacher rather than the divine figure of traditional doctrine. The questions raised by Reimarus are still being asked in the 21st century. Some perhaps find it surprising that traditional teachings should have been doubted in these terms quite so many years ago. Reimarus constructed an essentially secular Jesus using the same New Testament evidence which had provided the traditional theological portrait of Jesus. In other words he did not believe that this New Testament Jesus was God as mainline Christianity teaches! His study of the Bible lead him to point out discrepancies between, and within, the Old and New Testaments. I concur with this completely. If the New Testament is supposed to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament then we cannot have a refutation of the basics of the Old Testament and believe this is the fulfillment of the God that cannot change. He argued that the Gospels were not history but theological exposition by their authors. The authors of the Gospels had little or no concern with history. They were mainly interested in providing and then elucidating a theological meaning of Jesus of Nazareth. Reimarus thought that if one goes behind the theological constructions of the Gospel authors, one would find the simple, human Jesus with whom we can all identify. There's a real sense in which his thinking began the search for an historical Jesus. Reimarus eventually became convinced that Christianity was untrue, concluding that Jesus was in fact a Jewish revolutionary. As Albert Schweitzer later remarked, Reimarus was correct to think that Jesus had no intention of bringing the Jewish faith to an end in favor of the creation of a New Religion about "him" as Rome had later done. Simply for Remarus this Jesus was simply a preacher of "repentance" in hopes the Kingdom of God would materialize in Israel. But his disciples, says Reimarus, dismayed that none of his predictions had come true, stole his body after the crucifixion and adapted his teachings into the forms we now see in the New Testament. They were helped in this by Paul. After analyzing the language of the Gospels, Reimarus maintained that Jesus was actually a Jewish apocalyptic preacher who, as the cry from the cross witnessed, realized at the last that he had failed. He refused to accept the Bible as the revealed Word of God. His radical refutation of revelation - the fundamental basis of traditional theology in his times as today - differed from similar contemporary approaches. Many attacked traditional teachings in a speculative, superficial way. Others used inadequate historical arguments. Reimarus scholarship was much more historically sound. He recognized that by pressing rigorously historical questions he would be perceived to be undermining traditional Christianity's 'Gospel truth', so he decided not to allow his writings to be published in his lifetime. Reimarus was afraid of the controversy his book, An Apology for the Rational Worshipper of God, would stir up in what was then a deeply religious society. He decided not to publish. His manuscript was acquired after his death by G.E. Lessing who published parts of it in 1774 as Fragments of an Unknown Writer. Lessing (who was

a librarian) pretended he had discovered the work hidden among the contents of a library. One of the supposed fragments attacked the historicity of the resurrection. Another proposed that there is a radical difference between what Jesus taught and the doctrines of the Church. In 1788 Lessing published his own book about the origin of Matthew and its relationship to Mark and Luke. And so began intensive study of the Gospels which continues to this day. On the Aims of Jesus and His Disciples was published in 1778. Reimarus proposed in it that Jesus was human and no more, and that the Gospel authors had deceived the faithful. He proposed that the deception began with the invention by Jesus' disciples of a spiritual redemption. Remarus was close in his suspicion as it was not the Apostles who wrote these books but rather the later forgers of Rome who were responsible. But he was on the right track. This took the place of his actual political vision in which Israel would be liberated by God from its Roman oppressors. They then invented the resurrection to cover up their embarrassment when Jesus was crucified by those same oppressors.

Albert Schweitzer (author of The Quest of the Historical Jesus) summarized Reimarus thus: *Only those who carry the teachings of the catechism back into the preaching of the Jewish Messiah will arrive at the idea that he was the founder of a new religion. To all unprejudiced persons it is manifest that "Jesus has not the slightest intention of doing away with the Jewish religion and putting another in its place."*

I find it noteworthy that this view has found considerable support with a significant number of conservative scholars nearly 250 years later. Reimarus' importance lies in his attempt to understand Jesus as an historical person, rather than as a divine being about whom only the Church knows the full truth. His work made a strong impression on the German theological scene in the latter 18th century.

We need to recognize that with Remarus and Lessing that this was NOT the first time some of the issues discussed in this book were considered. Martin Luther was well aware of the mistakes and inconsistencies in Scripture. For example, he recognized that Matthew 27:9 mistakenly cited Jeremiah for Zechariah. He knew that there was a serious discrepancy between Matthew and John over the date of the cleansing of the temple: Matthew placed it at end of the ministry of Jesus, John at the beginning. Luther commented as follows:

*These are questions that I am not going to try to settle. Some people are so hairsplitting and meticulous that they want to have everything absolutely precise. But if we have the right understanding of Scripture and hold to the true article of our faith that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died and suffered for us, it won't matter much if we cannot answer all the questions put to us.*

In other words, Luther concluded that 'Gospel truth' was not undermined by discrepancies. In other words Luther is telling us that "Truth Does Not Matter"... "Just believe the story".

*I wholeheartedly disagree with Luther in the strongest way...I want the "Gospel Truth"!*

Not all of Luther's colleagues took the same line. Andreas Osiander was convinced that proven contradictions would undermine 'Gospel truth', so with great ingenuity he tried to harmonize the apparent discrepancies. This led him to conclude that Jesus must have been crowned with thorns twice, and that Peter must have warmed himself four times in the high priest's courtyard.

Similar issues were discussed over a thousand years earlier by Origen. This immensely learned and influential third-century church father has a strong claim to be considered the father of serious inquiry into Biblical manuscripts. Origen reflected on the reliability and purpose of the Gospels in the face of a stern challenge from the first important pagan opponent of Christianity, Celsus, who wrote between AD 177 and 180. Celsus drew on several strands of Greek philosophical and religious thought in defending what he called "an ancient doctrine which has existed from the beginning", a tradition which 'newly arrived' Christians



had corrupted.

**Answer for yourself:** What could this "ancient doctrine" that Christianity had corrupted possibly be? Could the early Gnostic Christians and their Gnostic Gospels which were only discovered just about 50 years ago possible be what Celsus was describing? Could it just be that it is these "Gnostic Gospels" which were written early in the first century but later repressed and destroyed and replaced by other "Gospels" by Rome (in the later second century)? Could this possibly have happened and through Roman forgery, creation, and invention of sacred texts and a lying Roman Church tradition which was created and later reinforced by the sword we end up today not hardly knowing anything about this corruption of the earliest "Christianity" before Rome changed it all?

### *What a question!!!*

One of the exchanges between Celsus and Origen takes us to the heart of my concerns in these articles. In the opening round of his attack, Celsus utilizes the distinctive views of a Jewish opponent of Jesus and his followers. Celsus's Jew says to Jesus:

*When you were bathing near John (at the time of your baptism) you say that you saw what appeared to be a bird fly towards you out of the air. What trustworthy witness saw this apparition, or who heard a voice from heaven adopting you as son of God? There is no proof except for your word and the evidence which you may produce of one of the men who were punished with you. (Contra Celsum 1:41)*

You see Celsus is unimpressed by the eyewitness testimony of a disciple, and **asks for independent reliable witnesses**. Origen knows that this challenge must be taken seriously. **Celsus acknowledges immediately that 'an attempt to substantiate almost any story as historical fact, even if it is true, and to produce complete certainty about it, is one of the most difficult tasks and in some cases is impossible.'** He then cites episodes from Greek history, and Greek myths and legends, in order to show how difficult it is to discover historical truth and how difficult it is to decide which traditions may be discerned to have a deeper, allegorical meaning. He then writes as follows:

*We have said this by way of introduction to the whole question of the narrative about Jesus in the Gospels, not in order to invite people with intelligence to mere irrational faith, but with a desire to show that readers need an open mind and considerable study, and, if I may say so, need to enter into the mind of the writers to find out with what spiritual meaning each event was recorded. (Contra Celsum I:42)*

**These issues are still with us today. Origen's perceptive comments set out an agenda for your own quest.** He refuses to allow his readers to shield their personal faith from difficult questions concerning the eyewitness character and reliability of the Gospels. **I, as a Pastor who studied too much, agrees with that with my whole being.** On the other hand, Origen knows that narratives about Jesus in the Gospels were **not recorded as historical records, but for the sake of the 'Gospel truth' they contain.**

**Answer for yourself:** Again we must ask: "Are we to understand this as 'Literal' or 'Allegorical' truth today? How did those who lives in those days in which these oral traditions and earliest written records, view "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ"?"

**Origin understood very clearly the intent of this New Testament which not always told the historical truth:**

*John 20:31 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;*

*and that believing ye might have life through his name. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** So why is it important that we know if the 4 Gospels in our possession today were written early or late? Simply this; either the early follower of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" understood this "Christ" as a Divine Principle in an allegorical way or else they knew this "Christ" as a historical person and wrote personally about him. Several problems surface if you have ever done any comparative religious studies for then you encounter these save events depicted in the life of this New Testament Jesus Christ which occurred in the lives of the prior Sun-gods and Sun-godmen. I find it hard to believe that the first century Jews, who opposed idolatry so strongly and forced a war with Rome over it, would pattern the life of their would-be Messiah as a prior Sun-god or Sun-godmen. Now Rome was engulfed in Sun-worship and one needs look there to find such forgery of the Jewish Messiah as depicted in the New Testament. If it can be proven that these 4 Gospels were not written early as the Catholic Church maintains and as our Christian Bibles today proclaim from this inherited Church Tradition then the picture of "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" as handed down to us in the New Testament is not truthful nor accurate to the facts. **Some might agree with Luther that it does not matter; others like myself believe it matters a great deal since this New Testament was handed down to me with the assurance that it is "Infallible, Inspired, and Inerrant"!** What matters is that if "the Christ" was an allegorical concept of Divine Principles that was know by the Ancients and personified as "Christ Jesus" and that this "Jesus Christ" as not a historical figure at all then whoever wrote this New Testament much later has deviated drastically from the original truths held by the earliest followers of "the Christ" since their depiction of him is definitely a literal presentation as if a historical figure. Where we all come in today is that we, as traditional Christians and follower of Jesus, have inherited and are worshipping a man whom is later made "God" by a vote of hands and the accounts of his life as recorded for us in this "forged" New Testament by selected early Church Fathers in the later second century and early third century have deceived us by replaying many Solar Myths as if they actually occurred by this assumed Jesus Messiah which Judaism rejects and has rejected since the Roman myth was given birth and backwritten into a historical timeline of their own making.

**Answer for yourself:** If this New Testament was written late and not early by these earliest "followers of the Christ" then has it been crafted with the purpose of hiding from us this "ancient doctrine" which was followed by the earliest followers of the true "Christ" in the first century? Do we have a "replacement religion" today and not know it? Can this "ancient doctrine" be shown to have come from the earliest Divine Revelation of God to man on this planet and handed down for all mankind in hopes of knowing the deeper truths of God? I found that it can and was until Rome destroyed both the Gnostic Jews as well as the Gnostic Gentiles. Few lived to carry on this "ancient doctrine" and in just so happens that archeology and serious study is returning these long lost truths to us today. May God be praised for the recovery of such truth!

**The key to all of this as Celsus knew is that there is truly an "ancient doctrine" that had been expressed for millennia through allegory and symbol which has been twisted and misrepresented to the masses in his day through the Christian Church.** Today we live in a continuation of this deception by those "in charge". Of course "those in charge" means the Roman Catholic Church who ruled politically and religiously with an iron fist for over one thousand years and which during that time "created" a new religion in their own likeness which was then as it is today blatant Sun-worship to those who can see it. We must pay close attention to the above passage from the Gospel of John as it tells us what we are reading in the whole of the New Testament. The New Testament is not a "historical accurate record" or a "biography" of anyone or anything but rather a creative document produced with the intention of securing for the powers at be a political-religious unity through the world-wide acceptance of Rome's version of the Jewish Messiah. So much study must be done to see firstly if what we are reading is truth or fiction and we can do that by studying in detail the writings of the Early Church Fathers and looking for references to these 4 Gospels which they assure us was written early. If we do this, and I have, and we can find no mention of these 4 Gospels by ANY of the Early Church Fathers until late in the second century then it seems very unlikely that these 4 Gospels were written early or by any possible followers of the Jewish Messiah of the first century or early second century. That means some other than Jewish followers of the Messiah are the authors of these documents. **Of course I can say that the earliest quote from any of these 4 Gospels will not be found until very late in the**



second century around 180 A.D. but let us not examine in detail the writings of each of these Early Church Fathers and see if they mention them. Surely they would have quoted from these 4 Gospels or mentioned them by name in their defense of their new religion against the Jews had they existed. So we turn our attention in the articles that now follow to look at these Early Church Fathers whom we are told to look toward for truth. What we may find is that it is these men who synthesized the Jewish Messiah with Sun-worship and presented this clever mixture to the world in the names of long dead prominent Jewish religious figures of the first century. Shalom will meet again.



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# INTRODUCTION...TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS AS TO THE EARLY DATE OF THE 4 GOSPELS

**Answer for yourself:** Who are the "Apostolic Fathers" and what does this term mean?

The title "Apostolic Fathers" refers to a circle of authors who are supposed to have had personal knowledge of some of the apostles, but did not actually belong to their number. Originally the title "Fathers of the Apostolic Age" was given to five authors whose works the patrologist J. B. Cotelerius first gathered together in 1672. The edition included the writings of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp." In this article we will look at more than just these sources to shed light upon the possible existence and dating of the writing of the 4 Gospels which we have today. In 1693 William Wake issued an English translation of the several documents under the title, *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*. Later it became customary to add to the corpus the anonymous *Epistle to Diognetus*, the fragmentary remains of Papias, and (after 1883 when its complete text was first published) the *Didache*, entitled in the manuscript "The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles".

As a title "Apostolic Fathers" does not represent any ancient tradition; there are no traces of any early collection of the writings of Apostolic Fathers, and each of them has a separate literary history. They span the period from about A.D. 95 to about 150, and are witnesses to the development of different emphases and styles of Christianity-for this was an epoch of transition and of consolidation. Christianity was beginning, little by little, to become an institution, and church leaders began placing emphasis on ecclesiastical organization. In addition to coming from widely spread geographical backgrounds, the Apostolic Fathers also represent a certain amount of doctrinal diversity in terms of developments within Jewish Christianity, on the one hand, and within Hellenistic Christianity, on the other.

The Apostolic Fathers seldom make express citations from New Testament writings. On the contrary (and particularly as regards the Gospels and the words of Jesus) we have allusions and reminiscences that are often difficult to identify and delicate to interpret. At most, the Apostolic Fathers disclose for this or that geographical area a certain (or rather, an uncertain) amount of knowledge and use of several first-century documents that were written mainly from ORAL TRADITION that only later came to be gathered into what we know as the New Testament today. Conspicuous from all of their writings is the lack of explicit reference to any of the 4 Gospels let alone any mention of them by name of explicit quotes from them by name. This is a serious problem for the recognition of their early existence as we are led to believe today. Yet this is not common knowledge; in fact just the reverse is believed and the great majority of our Bibles, especially study Bibles, tell us that our 4 Gospels were written early and mainline Christianity teaches that the early Church Fathers quoted from them quite often.

**Answer for yourself:** So did these early Church Fathers have in their possession our 4 Gospels and did they quote



**from them often as we are taught and led to believe by what we read in Christianity today? It is time we examine these writers and their writings under a critical eye to see if we have been taught the truth of the matter or if we have been misled.**

**Now let us examine these Apostolic Fathers in detail and see if we can find explicit references to or quotes from the 4 Gospels which we have in our possession today.**



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# WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF CLEMENT OF ROME

## CLEMENT OF ROME

The writing that goes under the title of *Clement* is an epistle written about A.D. 95-96 in the name of the church in Rome and traditionally ascribed to Clement, one of the prominent Christian leaders in Rome.

**Interesting Clement of Rome was a Jew and one of the earliest Bishops of the Roman Church and NEVER would quote from the corrupted Septuagint (the falsified Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures). He knew better and all quotes of the Old Testament in all of his writings were taken from the Hebrew Scriptures and not the Greek.** The forgery of the translation of our Christian Old Testaments and the resulting forgery of New Testament quotes is taken up on [Bet Emet's other websites](#).

When looking at the letter of I Clement of Rome we find that at Corinth several younger members, it seems, had risen against certain presbyters and ousted them from their position. When this became known to the Roman church, Clement drew up a rather lengthy communication calling the factions to repentance---for God, he declares, requires due order in all things. The deposed presbyters must be reinstated, he insists, and legitimate superiors appointed by the apostles or their successors must be obeyed. At the conclusion Clement expresses hope that the bearer of the epistle will return soon with good news that peace has been restored.

Throughout his epistle Clement weaves together a great number of quotations from the Old Testament. His letter refers to a couple of passages that we find later in the New Testament. But as shown previously this easily could be the recording of earlier "oral tradition" ascribed to the sayings of Jesus that many had committed to memory. Those quotations from the Old Testament are frequently introduced by such well-known formulas as "the Scripture says", "it is written", "that which is written", and are for the most part made with great exactness. Almost 30 per cent of Clement's epistle to the Corinthians can be cited as coming from Old Testament writings. The numbering of the actual quotations varies, but those citations which are formally introduced number 59. These are, as stated above, preceded by the conventional formulae, "thus it has been written," "for says," the writing," for it says somewhere," etc. The passages from which these quotations are drawn are distributed fairly evenly among the pentateuch, prophets and hagiographa. Most used is the Psalms; then Isaiah and Genesis follow as the next most used books. In striking contrast, Clement only introduces two references to sayings later found in our New Testament. What is striking is that rather than his customary formula for citing a writing, both times the phrase ***"remember the words of the Lord Jesus"*** is used. **Another contrast is seen between Clement's usually accurate rendition of the Old Testament passages and the evidently free combining of phrases which we later find in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.** Although it is true that Clement is capable of quoting Old Testament writings in this free fashion, **he nowhere cites a New Testament passage, with a formal introduction, in the same verbatim fashion that some writings from the Old Testament are used.** So what we have is the fact that the few allusions to later New Testament passages are made in a different way. Metzger informs us in his The Canon of the New Testament that instead of introducing gospel material with formulas of citation that imply a written record, Clement twice urges his



readers to "**remember** the words of the Lord Jesus".

**Answer for yourself:** If Clement quotes from the written record of the Old Testament in exact quotes then why does he not do the same if a written record of the 4 Gospels existed in his day?

**Answer for yourself:** Does Clement's insistence to only "remember"; "remember the words of the Lord Jesus" rather reflect something held in one's memory from an **oral tradition** that had been passed down orally rather than a written and circulating record?

In 13:2 Clement puts together a collection of phrases, some of which are later to be found in similar form in both Matthew and Luke, while others of which have no exact parallels in the four Gospels. He writes:

*Especially remember the words of the Lord Jesus which he spoke when teaching gentleness and long-suffering. For he spoke thus: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that you may be forgiven; as you do [to others], so shall it be done to you; as you give, so shall it be given to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you show kindness, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you.*

**These phrases are similar to those that we find today in Matt. 5:7; 6:14-15, 7:1-2, 12; and Luke 6:31, 36-38, but there is no very explicit parallel in our gospels.**

*Matt 5:7 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (KJV)*

*Matt 6:14-15 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (KJV)*

*Matt 7:1-2 1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (KJV)*

*Matt 7:12 12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (KJV)*

*Luke 6:31 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. (KJV)*

*Luke 6:36-38 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Is Clement actually referring in his above statement to a written gospel in his day or is he referring to an oral tradition of sayings attributed to "the Christ"?

As discussed in an earlier article we saw that the passages from the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew was not new material to the hearers but rather an example of Remez where there was an allusion to previously taught precepts which were taught by prior Rabbis. This explains rather easily that the subject matter, sayings, and teachings references by Clement of Rome which others might think came from a written gospel in his day were possibly nothing more than oral traditions which other Jewish hearers of Jesus would surely have been familiar.

In the absence of solid explicit documentation of written records or "gospels" there is a very strong probability

and more than likely we have before us only a case where Clement is either quoting by memory oral tradition ascribed to "the Christ", or is making use of some other Jewish written record from other Rabbis since he was Jewish or is referring possibly to some unwritten form of the catechesis of Jesus' teaching current in the Roman church. The question is complicated by the fact that an analogous combination is found in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 2. 18. 9!); Polycarp (*Phil.* 11. 3) also reproduces some of the same elements of the series.

The other reference to Jesus' teaching occurs in 46. 7-8, where Clement writes:

***Remember the words of the Lord Jesus; for he said, "Woe to that man. It would be better for him if he had not been born, rather than that he should offend one of my elect. It would be better for him that a millstone were hung on him, and he be cast into the sea, than that he should pervert one of my elect.***

Now let us see this same teaching as recorded in the New Testament:

***Mark 9:42 42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (KJV)***

***Matt 18:6-7 6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! (KJV)***

***Luke 17:1-2 1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. (KJV)***

**Here in the Clement passage above one recalls the words of Jesus found in Mark 9:42; Matt. 18:6-7; and Luke 17:1-2, but there is no parallel to the clauses about offending and perverting the elect. Obviously then Clement has knowledge of an oral tradition that preserves the words of Jesus; it is not certain, however, that he has before him written copies of any of the Synoptic Gospels, or, if he had written copies, that he felt impelled to quote exactly had written records or gospels existed in his day. Again problematic is the complete lack of reference to any gospel by name existing in his day!**

In addition to these two direct references to Jesus' words, Clement's epistle contains one or two other instances of possible allusions to Synoptic tradition. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these is the use he makes in 24.5 of imagery from the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3; Mark 4:3; Luke 8:5) in his homily on I Cor. 15:36 ff.

**Allegorical interpretation was widely used in the early Church, and according to Philo it was commonplace amongst the Palestinian Rabbinical schools of the 1st century CE.** Greek philosophers used allegorical interpretation to expound the writings of Homer and Plato, and these methods met with some limited acceptance amongst Jews and early Christians. Most of the Fathers (Irenaeus, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, ... used Allegorical interpretation to expound the Christian Gospel from the Hebrew scriptures, and to interpret the Christian scriptures to the contemporary Church. **But whether he is depending on a written gospel or on oral tradition is difficult to decide.**

**Answer for yourself:** What should we have seen as we saw Clement's limited use of the sayings of Jesus as opposed to his profuse quotations from the Jewish Tanakh in his letter to Corinth?

**It is remarkable that Clement invokes the absolute authority of the words of Jesus only twice, whereas he refers to passages in books of the Hebrew Scriptures more than one hundred times.**



Clement's testimony concerning several of the Pauline Epistles is more definite. In chap. 47: he invites his readers in Corinth to consult the epistle which "the blessed apostle Paul" had sent them. In contrast to his omission of the existence for any gospel written record but only an oral tradition from which he makes mention of the sayings of "the Christ" Clement makes explicit reference to an existing writing of Paul. The Pauline epistles exist at this time but evidently the 4 written gospels which orthodox later church tradition will tell us were written early and surely by the time of Clement evidently do not exist for him. Clement states this very clearly in a manner which suggests that a copy of Paul's Epistle was as accessible in Rome as in Corinth but no mention of any written gospel record is mentioned by Clement. Elsewhere Clement appears to make definite allusions to several other Epistles of Paul, including Romans, Galatians, Philippians, and Ephesians.

Interesting and very important to note at this early date is the fact that there is no reference by Clement to any of the later forged epistles of Paul created by later proto-anti-Gnostic catholics like Irenaeus after 180 C.E.

This presupposes the existence of a collection of Pauline Epistles. It is to be noted that when Clement refers to these Epistles as writings filled with good counsel given by one to whom the Corinthian believers should pay attention, he does not present them as invested with divine authority. Paul's epistles were not "Scripture" to Clement of Rome! In fact, after giving in 30. 5-6 a paraphrase of Rom. 1. 29-32, Clement continues, "For the Scripture says.."and then presents a quotation from Psalm 1. 16-23. This leads us to conclude that for Clement the Pauline Epistles were not Scripture, though he obviously regards them as possessing a certain kind of authority.

By way of summary, we see that Clement's Bible is the Jewish Tanakh, the Old Testament, to which he refers repeatedly as Scripture, quoting it with more or less exactness. It is rather strange to reflect upon this fact in light of the current situation whereby Rome will replace the Tanakh as the only Bible of the early church with a later forged Second New Testament that replaces not only the earlier Gnostic First New Testament but which has come to function as the orthodox replacement religious document of the last two thousand years. Clement also makes occasional reference to certain words of Jesus; though they are authoritative for him, he does not appear to enquire how their authenticity is ensured. In two of the three instances that he speaks of remembering "the words" of Christ or of the Lord Jesus, he may have a written record in mind but we simply don't know by what he writes. We do know for a fact that if one had existed he never mentions it explicitly nor does not call it a "gospel". He knows several of Paul's epistles, and values them highly for their content; the same can be said of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with which he is well acquainted. Although these writings obviously possess for Clement considerable significance, he never refers to them as authoritative "Scripture".

So when looking at this earliest of the Apostolic Fathers we have no record for the existence of any of the 4 gospels we have in our New Testament today and such omission of any credible reference to such written documents espoused as written early today by later Christian tradition after Clement is a damaging fact attesting otherwise.



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# DOES CLEMENT OF ROME SUPPORT THAT LUKE WAS WRITTEN LATER THEN MARCION'S GOSPEL OF THE LORD?

## CLEMENT OF ROME...HIS TESTIMONY TO THE LATE DATE OF LUKE

Most Christian commentators maintain that Luke was written early and that Marcion in and around 140 C.E. butchered the existing Gospel of Luke in production of his Gospel that was in the first New Testament. But this simply is not true; rather, the Gospel of Marcion predated Luke by over 50 years. Marcion's Gospel was probably written first. The first two chapters of Luke were not in Marcion. In place of the 3rd and 4th chapters, there was the first chapter in Marcion's Gospel, which commenced as follows:

*"Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Ceasar, Pontius Pilate ruling in Judea, Jesus came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and straightway on the Sabbath days, going into the synagogue, he taught. 2. And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power."* (Charles B. Waite, History of the Christian Religion to the Year Two Hundred, C.V. Waite and Co, 1900, p. 20).

No grander character appears in Christian history, than Clement of Rome. We date him around 100 A.D. (C.E.). Whether we look at his First Epistle to the Corinthians, generally considered to be genuine, or at the numerous other writings attributed to him, and the recorded traditions concerning his life and teachings, we find, in either case, one of the highest and noblest types of Christian character. His first Epistle, written about A. D. 97, will compare favorably with the authentic Epistles of Paul.

The great and absorbing question connected with this, the first authentic Christian writing outside the gospels, and subsequent to the New Testament Epistles, is, whether any of the gospels are recognized in it, and which?

There are some passages claimed as parallel, but there is no mention of any gospel by name in the Clement literature. Of the supposed parallel passages, some have a similarity of language, while the idea is different; in others, the same or a similar meaning is conveyed in different language.

When these are eliminated, it will be found, that while there are, in Clement, twenty passages parallel to similar ones in the N. T. Epistles, there are but five parallel to any in the later canonical gospels. But these do not by any means indicate that these gospels were then in existence. The passages all relate to the sayings of Christ, which were preserved by tradition, as well as in older gospels. Four of the parallelisms are in Matthew, and no doubt were in the Oracles, or other collections of sayings, to which Clement had access. The other is in Luke, 6th chapter, vv. 36 to 38. That also is a saying of Christ, which in Clement differs considerably from Luke, although Clement professes to give the very "words of the Lord Jesus, which he



spake." [Clem. Ep. ch. 13].

Tischendorf concludes that Clement's Epistle does not furnish proof of the existence of the four gospels at that time (Tischendorf, Origin of the 4 Gospels, p. 52).

## PROOF OF THE LATE DATE OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND THE PRIMACY OF MARCION'S GOSPEL

In connection with the Epistle of Clement, there is a circumstance worthy of notice.

In the 17th chapter of Luke, between the 1st and 2d verses, the words elsewhere occurring in the gospels, "*it had been good for that man if he had not been born,*" are lacking. Now these very words were in the Gospel of Marcion, in the same connection as they would be if between verses 1st and 2d, of 17th Luke. They were also used in a similar connection, by Clement, in the 46th chapter of his Epistle, long before the time of Marcion.

**Answer for yourself:** If then, as is claimed, Marcion's Gospel is nothing but a corruption of Luke, how did it happen, that Marcion should insert or interpolate a sentence precisely in the same connection in which it had been used by Clement?

**Answer for yourself:** Is it not more probable that Clement and Marcion were using in common an ancient gospel, in which that sentence occurred, and that the author of Luke either omitted the sentence, or made use of a different version of the same ancient gospel? It is true, these or similar words occur in Mark and Matthew, but not in the same connection as in Marcion. In Clement they are in the same connection.

So what we have before us is an early attestation that Madoesrcion and Clement of Rome agreed as to the wording of the same gospel which we find in Marcion's First New Testament. Only much later do we find a variant reading with the Gospel of Luke which disagrees with the earlier record of the Gospel unique to both Clement of Rome and Marcion. This leads us to conclude that the Gospel of Marcion predated Luke and we even have the testimony of Clement of Rome to this fact as well.



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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

According to Origen, Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch, the successor of the apostle Peter; according to Eusebius, he was the third, following Peter's successor, Euodius. Nothing is known of his life except his journey under armed guard from Antioch to Rome, where his martyrdom took place under the Emperor Trajan about **A.D. 110. Of importance for us is the fact that his writings are dates a little later than those of Clement of Rome so we get a little better picture of the evolution of Christianity from examining his writings for theological content.**

On his way to Rome for martyrdom Ignatius is credited to have written seven epistles, four from Smyrna and three from Troas. At Smyrna he wrote epistles of encouragement to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles in Asia Minor; in the fourth epistle, addressed to the church in Rome, he asks them not to deprive him of martyrdom by intervening on his behalf with the pagan authorities. At Troas, having received news that the persecution at Antioch had ceased, he wrote to the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna as well as to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, asking them to send legates to congratulate the Christians at Antioch on the restoration of peace.

The style of these epistles is of inimitable originality. Written in an abrupt and incoherent style, overloaded with metaphors and elaborate rhetoric, they none the less manifest such strong faith and overwhelming love of Christ as to make them one of the finest literary expressions of Christianity during the second century. It agrees with the style of Ignatius, and particularly with the circumstances under which the epistles were composed, that quotations are few in number, brief in extent, and made evidently from memory.

**Throughout his epistles Ignatius frequently uses language that echoes characteristic phrases found in the Pauline writings.** Apparently struck by Paul's depreciating reference to himself as "the offscouring of all things" (I Cor. 4:13), Ignatius twice employs it with reference to himself in his *Epistle to the Ephesians* (8.1;18.1). He uses Paul's expression , "**lest I be found a castaway**" (I Cor. 9:27) in *Trail.* 12.3, and in *Rom.* 5.1 he incorporates almost verbatim Paul's phrase from I Cor. 4:4 "**but not by this am I justified**". **Again and again he makes use of phrases drawn from Paul's vivid description of himself when writing to the Corinthians: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he [Christ] appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am"**(I Cor.15:8-10). These words obviously made such an impression on Ignatius that he includes echoes from the passage in five of his letters:

- I am unworthy, being the very least of them and an untimely birth; but I have obtained mercy to be someone (*Rom.* 9.1).
- I who am the very least of the faithful (*Eph.* 21.2).
- I am not worthy to be called a member [of the church in Syria], being the very least of them (*Trail.* 13.1).
- I am not worthy to be called a member (*Magn.* 4.1).
- I am not worthy to belong to it [the church], being the very least of them. But by God's will I have been



judged worthy, not because of the witness of my own conscience, but by the grace of God (*Smyrn. 11.1*).

In addition to I Corinthians, parallels in phraseology make it probable that Ignatius was acquainted also with several other Pauline Epistles, including Romans, Ephesians, and Philipians.

**Interesting and very important to note at this early date is the fact that there is no reference by Ignatius to any of the later forged epistles of Paul created by later proto-anti-Gnostic Catholics like Irenaeus after 180 C.E.**

We turn now to enquire how far Ignatius knew about Jesus and his ministry, and whether this knowledge rested on his use of written gospels or only on oral tradition. The evidence, as we shall see, is very scanty.

We have no works by Papias surviving. All that remains is quotations of his work and minute fragments. Unfortunately, **Papias is not a reliable witness as we have no direct testimony from him.** Even if we did have direct testimony, he lived too far after the reported writing of the Gospel of Mark that he is useless to us. Mahlon Smith, a Christian and Associate Professor of the NT at Rutgers University, has this to say about Papias:

*Clearly, Papias was no scholar. For he based his opinions on hearsay rather than on the comparison of texts. Moreover, Papias himself did not claim to be a disciple of "the elders," but rather a reporter who sought interviews with those who were their followers. Therefore, Papias' testimony is at best two steps removed from the apostolic generation, & even more from Jesus himself. This needs to be kept in mind in evaluating his comments about the composition of the gospels.*

While Ignatius died for his allegiance and belief in Jesus, it is not clear exactly what that belief was in terms of later controversies. **One thing is for certain and that is that Ignatius did not mention written gospels, and did not die for the accuracy of the New Testament, which did not exist at that time. He did however reference two passages that resemble passages we later find in our Gospel of Matthew, but he knew nothing of John.** As for the Synoptic Gospels, there are much closer parallels in Ignatius with Matthew than with Mark or Luke. In an elaborate statement of Christian doctrine at the opening of his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius states that Jesus was "baptized by John so that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him" (1.1). It is significant that of the Evangelists it is Matthew alone who states that, in order to persuade John to baptize him, Jesus urged that *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matt. 3:15). Later in the same epistle, when speaking of a difficult and mysterious subject (the judgement of angels who do not believe in Christ's blood), Ignatius states bluntly, "He who receives this, let him receive it" (6.1). One is reminded of Jesus' words reported by Matthew in another context, *"He who is able to receive this, let him receive it"* Matt. 12:12).

These reminiscences, as well as several instances of what seem to be echoes of what will later be recorded in the gospel of Matthew as alluded to in Ignatius (e.g. *Polyc. 2.2* and Matt. 10:16; *Eph. 5:2* and Matt. 18:19,20), have led some scholars to conclude that Ignatius was acquainted either with Matthew or a document very closely akin to it.

**Answer for yourself:** But can we say for sure that like Clement we only find Ignatius referencing an oral tradition of the sayings of "the Christ" since he again makes no mention of a gospel writer by name or alludes to a written record or a "gospel" containing the sayings of "the Christ"?

**Answer for yourself:** Is it not equally possible, given the fact above, that these oral traditions of the sayings of "the Christ" were possibly later written down in the form of the gospels which we are familiar with today and that familiarity with an oral tradition does not guarantee a prior existing written record or gospel; especially in light of the fact that the Semitic culture is known for their memorization of religious texts and such a fact testifies to the importance of oral tradition as a vehicle for spreading religious teachings far and wide?

The question whether Ignatius knew the Gospel according to Luke depends largely upon what one thinks of the similarities between the following passages.

*Smyrn. 3.1-2 For myself, I know and believe that that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection. And when he came to those with Peter, he said to them, 'Lay hold and handle me, and see that I am not a phantom without a body'.*

*Luke 24:39 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. (KJV)*

Whether this shows that Ignatius is dependent upon the gospel of Luke or is quoting from some other source, oral or written, it is difficult to decide with certainty. But one thing is for sure he is not quoting an existing gospel of Luke or else he would have mentioned it and claim apostolic authority for this doctrine for which he does not!

Let us not forget that ironically the writer of the gospel of Luke testifies that he learns of "the Christ" second hand and that others taught him and communicated to him the sayings of "the Christ". He learned from eyewitnesses to "the Christ" which he was not.

*Luke 1:1-2 1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; (KJV)*

Yet in all of this we still find not one reference by Ignatius to a written source from which he might had taken for the background of his sayings and beliefs of "the Christ". We are left once again with strong evidence for an oral tradition behind the teachings of Ignatius.

Interesting and very important to note at this early date is the fact that there is no reference by Clement to any of the later forged epistles of Paul created by later proto-anti-Gnostic Catholics like Irenaeus after 180 C.E.

In contrast to the scarceness of allusions to the Synoptic Gospels, Ignatius' epistles not infrequently present echoes of what will be included later in the fourth Gospel. This is not surprising when we examine early Christianity and the metaphysical and esoteric teachings of "the Christ" that existed in early Gnostic Christianity that predates the later "literal" anti-Gnostic orthodoxy of Roman Christianity which we encounter between the 2nd through the 5th centuries. The following are several of the more significant instances.

(1) To the Magnesians (7.2) Ignatius speaks concerning God: '[He] manifested himself through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his word that proceeded from silence, who in all respects was well-pleasing to him that sent him'. Here we have two rather obvious allusions to the Johannine Gospel (1:1 and 8:28-29).

But here again we don't have a quote but only an allusion to a prior teaching concerning "the Christ". There is not a mention of a gospel by name nor a quote from an existing written record by Ignatius. This speaks loud and strong again for the source of such a doctrine being oral tradition.

(2) To the Philadelphians (7.1) he writes: 'Even though certain persons desired to deceive me after the flesh, yet the spirit [i.e. Ignatius' own spirit] is not deceived, for it is from God. For it knows whence it comes and whither it goes'. The same five Greek words occur in John 8:9 with regard to the divine Spirit.

(3) Ignatius writes to the Romans (7.2) that 'the prince of this age desires to take me captive, and to corrupt my mind which is toward God'. This reminds one of repeated references in the Fourth Gospel (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) to 'the prince of this world'. A few sentences later Ignatius refers to the 'living water' that speaks within him,



saying, 'Come to the Father' (cf. John 4:10; 7:38). In the next line he declares: 'I have no desire for corruptible food or for the delights of this life. I desire the "bread of God", which is the flesh of Christ, "who was of the seed of David", and for my drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible.' Here we find phrases like those in John 7:33 and 7:42, as well as other echoes of Johannine theology.

(4) To the Philadelphians (9.1) he makes use of the metaphor of Christ as the door, emphasizing the Johannine doctrine of the pre-incarnate activity of the Logos: 'He [the high priest] is the door of the Father, through which enter Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets and the Apostles and the Church. All these things combine in the unity of God'. Here it is remarkable how many themes that occur in the Fourth Gospel seem to be amalgamated in Ignatius' thinking (John 8: 30-59; 10:7, 9; 14:6; 17:20-23).

Answer for yourself: What should we learn from such analogy but the lack of quotes or reference to an existing written gospel by name? The same lesson that we learned in the prior article; namely that such instances of parallels, sometimes of words and sometimes of ideas, show that Ignatius was well acquainted with Johannine theology but again the absence of exact quotes or references to existing gospels by name leads us to again conclude that Ignatius received such understanding from oral tradition. It might surprise the reader but the logos teaching is not a new teaching beginning with Jesus but was well known since Egypt and surely Ignatius was familiar with this concept as existing long before the time of Jesus. The absence of any explicit quotation from this Gospel is quite in harmony with the understanding that we have seen before that much of the sayings of "the Christ" had been transmitted orally and continued to be done so in absence of the early gospels which we have today.

Ignatius uses the introductory formula "It is written" only three times, all of them referring to the Old Testament—two from the book of Proverbs (*Magn.* 12.1 and *Eph.* 5.3.) and the other in connection with a highly condensed and curiously ambiguous report of a debate that he had, apparently with Judaizing Christians at Philadelphia (*Philad.* 8.2-9.1). In that debate his opponents declared (according to the interpretation adopted by most commentators on the passage) that if they did not find it in the "archives" (here referring to the Old Testament), they did not believe it in the Gospel). When he retorted that Scripture in fact supported him ("But it is written"), they answered, "That is just the question"—in other words, they questioned the messianic interpretation that Ignatius placed on proof-texts drawn from the Old Testament "archives". In other words they did not believe in his messianic interpretations which he applied to "the Christ"! Boy that should say something to us loud and clear. The earliest Christians had a completely different understanding of the Jewish Messiah than we have inherited today from Roman orthodoxy.

In closing we can only say for certain that Ignatius, around 110 C.E., only knew a collection of Paul's Epistles, including (in the order of frequency of his use of them) I Corinthians, Ephesians, Romans, Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians., and I Thessalonians. He makes no mention of the later anti-Gnostic Pauline Epistles which modern scholarship inform us are outright forgeries in Paul's name. It is probable that he knew the oral tradition of the sayings attributed to "the Christ" which will later be incorporated into our 4 gospels but there is no explicit reference to any existing gospel or any gospel in the names of the apostles which we are familiar with today. More importantly there is no evidence that he regarded any of these Pauline Epistles as Scripture.



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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF THE DIDACHE

The *Didache*, alternatively called The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, is an **ancient Christian text written around 140 A.D.**, and appears to be a catechism for the early Church. The *Didache* was first published in its entirety in 1833 by Philotheos Bryennios, contained within the 11th century manuscript Codex Hierosolymitanus 1056, although fragments of the text have been identified in ancient manuscripts including the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. After its publication, it was observed that large portions of the *Didache* have been published previously within a variety of other works, but without recognition of their specific origin. For example, much of the *Didache* appears in the seventh book of the Apostolic Constitutions originating in Syria in the 4th century. Since many early Christian writers made reference to sections of the *Didache*, it has been easy to **accurately date the *Didache* to the early part of the second century.** In simpler jargon the *Didache* is a short manual of moral instruction and church practice. Although referred to by more than one patristic author (Eusebius and Athanasius even considered it to be on the fringe of the New Testament canon), no copy was known until 1875 when a manuscript (written A.D. 1056) was discovered by Philotheos Bryennios, the Metropolitan of Nicomedia, in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople.

**Questions concerning author, date, and place of origin of the *Didache* are notoriously difficult.**

**Answer for yourself:** Although the majority of scholars date the *Didache* from 140 C.E. others disagree. What are the 3 major dates given for its origin today?

- **Many scholars have assigned the *Didache* to the first century,**
- **Many scholars date it in the first half of the second century.**
- **Other scholars have dated it to the third or even fourth century.**

**We really don't know from the historical record its accurate date but if we look at the internal evidences within the *Didache* we see a fairly well organized church which reflects a late date instead of an earlier date. Certainly it seems to reflect the life of an early, and perhaps isolated, Christian community in the second rather than the first century.** This is important for us in determining its reference to the existence of possibly one or more of the 4 gospels concurrent with its origin and existence. Whether it originated in Syria or Egypt is disputed, but the former is more likely.

The document is composed of two parts:

- **(1) instruction about the "Two Ways", and**
- **(2) a manual of church order and practice.**

The "Two Ways" material appears to have been intended as a summary of basic instruction about the Christian life to be taught to those who were preparing for baptism and church membership. In its present form it represents the **Christianization of a common Jewish form of moral instruction. This in itself reveals a distancing of the Gentile church from its Jewish Roots which is not dated early but rather late and**



### surely after 135 C.E. after the Bar Kochba war.

The second part consists of instructions about food, baptism, fasting, prayer, the Eucharist, and various offices and positions of leadership. In addition to providing the earliest evidence of a mode of baptism other than immersion, it records the oldest known Christian Eucharist prayers and a form of the Lord's Prayer quite similar to that which will be later found in the Gospel according to Matthew.

As stated dating the *Didache* is difficult because there is a lack of hard evidence and it is a composite document. It may have been put into its present form as late as 150 CE, though a date considerably closer to the end of the 1st century seems is touted by many today in order to connect such "instructions" to Apostolic authority which gives credence for the separation from a Jewish influenced worship. The materials from which it was composed, however, reflect the state of the church at an even earlier time and the *Didache* reveals to us an "evolving" Gentile Church that has departed from its Hebrew Roots.

Of the sixteen brief chapters, chaps. 1-6 describe the "Way of Life" and the "Way of Death", while chaps. 7-15 contain instructions on baptism, fasting, prayer, the Eucharist, and how to treat prophets, bishops, and deacons. Chap. 16 is a prophecy of the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ. The authority for these teachings, as suggested by the subtitle, is none other than Jesus through the mediation of the apostles.

**Answer for yourself:** Does the mention of the "Second Coming of Christ" possibly refer to a time period following the failed Bar Kochba rebellion of 134 C.E. since many "messianic believers" had held out hopes of the appearance of the Jewish Messiah as "the Christ" and many looked to him as their "redeemer"? This certainly cannot be denied and is again evidence indicating a late date for the *Didache*.

The word "apostles", however, does not occur in the book itself, except at xi. 3-6 where it refers, not to the Twelve or Paul, but to itinerant evangelists. The title, therefore, seems to have been added sometime after the document was drawn up.

Now let us focus upon the written references to passages not only in the Old Testament but which might possible be connected to the later New Testament. Among written sources used by the author, we find two quotations from the Old Testament (xiv. 13 from Mal. 1:11, and xvi. 7 from Zech. 14:5). More importantly we find actually two from the New Testament (both from Matthew): The two quotations from Matthew are,

"Do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in his gospel, pray thus: *'Our Father who art in heaven.., for thine is the power and the glory forever'*" (viii. 2, from Matt. 6:5),

There is strong evidence that the original Greek text of Matthew did not include the KJV's "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." The Lord's Prayer as it appears in Luke 11:2-4 also does not include *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*

Mary Baker Eddy, in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy, 1910, page 16), says, There is indeed some doubt among Bible scholars, whether the last line is not an addition to the prayer by a later copyist; but this does not affect the meaning of the prayer itself. We also find that Bruce Metzger, in his definitive *Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament, Second Edition* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), comments regarding verse 13:

*The ascription at the close of the Lord's Prayer occurs in several forms... Some Greek manuscripts expand "for ever" into "for ever and ever," and most of them add "amen." Several late manuscripts ... append a trinitarian ascription, "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen." The same expansion occurs also at the close of the Lord's Prayer in the liturgy that is traditionally ascribed to St. John Chrysostom. The absence of any ascription in early and important representatives of the [most reliable manuscripts], as well as early patristic commentaries on the Lord's Prayer..., suggests that an ascription, usually in a*



*threefold form, was composed (perhaps on the basis of 1 Chr 29, 11-13) in order to adapt the Prayer for liturgical use in the early church. Still later scribes added "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

Hans Dieter Betz (The Sermon on the Mount: Hermeneia Series, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1995, pages 414-415) commented:

Christian liturgical usage knows a doxology following SM/Matt 6:13: *"For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory into the ages. Amen"* ... This doxology, however, was not part of the "original" Lord's Prayer; it was not part of the Matthean SM [Sermon on the Mount] either. The reasons for excluding it are text-critical: the best and oldest manuscripts do not have it, and the earliest commentaries on the Lord's Prayer do not know of it (Tertullian [160-225 A.D.], Origen [185-254 A.D.], and Cyprian [martyred 258 A.D.] do not know of it). **Also, the parallel in Luke 11:4 does not have it.** In addition, those manuscripts that do contain a doxology have it in a variety of forms. Apart from this well-known textual situation, one needs to consider the following problems:

1. The text-critical situation raises the question of the origin of the doxology. Most scholars assume that it was composed on the basis of 1 Chr 29:11-13, but this hypothesis raises more questions than it attempts to answer. Joachim Jeremias seems to be right in providing a functional explanation. According to him, it was unthinkable that a performance of the Lord's Prayer should end abruptly on the word "temptation." Rather, the liturgical order was to end a prayer with a spontaneous praise that was cited from **memory**. This possibility seems indeed to be attractive. Still, it raises yet another question. While, as an oral text, the Lord's Prayer could very well have ended with some kind of praise, what about the written text? Was the doxology omitted in the written text because it was self-evident that it should follow?

If the prayer instruction contained only what was necessary and not self-evident, the written form may have omitted the doxology as a noncontroversial custom that was understood to be observed anyway. When the Lord's Prayer later entered into the formal liturgical usage of the Christian church, the liturgical pressure exerted on the Prayer may have led to the inclusion of doxologies current at the time (2d/3d century CE), and this usage then influenced some copyists of the New Testament manuscripts. This possibility, while it does not answer all the problems, would at least mean that the doxologies attested at present in the manuscripts cannot have been a part either of the "original" oral text of the Lord's Prayer or of its written citation in the SM. If a Jewish doxology was used at the earliest stage, it must now be considered lost. The doxologies attested by the manuscript tradition, however, do not show traces of Christian theology; they are Jewish in formulation and theology. If they are taken from Christian tradition, they may simply have been adopted from Jewish liturgy. At any rate, the fluidity of liturgical materials generally should keep one from constructing a clear line of development from the prayer instruction to the doxologies found in the textual tradition of Matthew.

2. If one applies the category of doxology, one should be aware of a form-critical problem. The composition lacks the typical elements of a doxology. It does not begin with a dative but with "for" (hoti) and a genitive (cf. Gal 1:5; Rom 11:36b; 16:25-27; Rev 5:1.3). Therefore, the designation "doxology" applies only in the general sense (see also Origen De orat. 14 and 33). Tholuck has questioned the category of "doxology" and prefers "aetiology" and "acclamation" ... Perhaps the original function of the "doxology" in the Lord's Prayer was that of a response by the worshipping congregation. While the prayer was spoken by the liturgist, the community responded with the "doxology," so that for this reason it was not regarded as part of the Lord's Prayer itself. This possibility is strengthened by the concluding response "Amen."

3. The doxology does not harmonize with the Lord's Prayer at some points. It remains unclear to which referent hoti ("for") refers; it may refer to the first three petitions or to the whole prayer. Except for the term "kingdom" (basileia [6:10a]), its language plays no role in the Prayer itself, nor is it reflected elsewhere in the SM (cf. Matt 6:33a). **Thus, I conclude that in language, form, and theology, the doxology came from Jewish and Christian liturgy and was inserted in some manuscripts at a later time.**



Also we see a reference in the *Didache* to 'Let no one eat or drink of your eucharist except those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord; for to this also the saying of the Lord is applicable, *"Do not give that which is holy to the dogs"*' (ix. 5, from Matt. 7:6).

**Answer for yourself:** What is unique about these two passages which we have seen in a previous article? Again we see before our eyes a beautiful example of Remez which is one of the 4 types of Rabbinical methods of teaching whereby a Rabbi or "teacher" provides nothing new in the way of a teaching to his audience but rather alludes back to something which his audience had previously known or heard. This method of teaching is a hallmark of Rabbinical instruction so we should expect that such short and pithy phrases would be indicative of Remez and more suited again for an oral tradition rather than a written document. The great teachers (rabbis) during Jesus' day used a technique that was later called remez. In their teaching, they would use part of a Scripture passage or a "familiar teaching to their audience" in a discussion, assuming that their audience's knowledge of the Bible and their faith would allow them to deduce for themselves the fuller meaning of the teaching. Again we must acknowledge that at this time these Jewish people were known for their ability to memorize not only their Scriptures but various "sayings" attributed to the great Rabbis. So we are dealing not with "ignorant" people as we are led to believe by the anti-semitic writers of the later New Testament but rather a people who possessed a brilliant understanding of Scripture. The Rabbis used this method often in their teaching and this information in the Sermon on the Mount is not "new" information and easily was subject to memory; especially when dealing with prayer. The other allusion is equally common as it addressed the ongoing battle between the "righteous" and the "non-righteous" and in particular this applied to the serious problem concerning the "gentiles" in the first century as well.

**The basic point should not be missed.** The New Testament was not written in a vacuum but in the context of first century Judaism. Just as it is necessary to know the Roman and Greek backgrounds to understand books like Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, etc., by the same token it is necessary to understand the first century Jewish background to understand what we are reading or hearing when passages from the time of Jesus come our way; many of which we find later in the Gospels. **This is also important to understand how the New Testament quotes the Old Testament or makes allusion to it.**

**What this tells us is that just because we find two references to sayings that later find their way into Rome's New Testament we have no warrant to assume the existence of a whole corpus of Gospels existing at that time. Knowing the culture and how Rabbis taught their audiences helps us understand the importance of oral tradition and memory of key phraseology in ancient Judaism.**

## MEMORIZATION IN JUDAISM AND BIBLE STUDY...THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ORAL TRADITION

A good indication of what a young Jewish man in Jesus' day would have been doing concerning Scriptural study may be found in Avot 5:21, a tractate from a collection of rabbinic sayings called the Mishnah, which states: *At five years of age, one is ready for the study of the Written Torah, at ten years of age for the study of the Oral Torah, at thirteen for bar mitzvah [the religious coming-of-age ceremony], at fifteen for the study of halachot [rabbinic legal decisions], at eighteen for marriage, at twenty for pursuing a vocation, at thirty for entering one's full vigor....*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that at 5 years of age a child was beginning the study of the Torah and at ten years of age a study of the Oral Law?

Certainly education was highly valued in Jewish society. In his apology for Judaism, *Against Apion*, written to counter anti-Semitism, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus states: *Above all we pride ourselves on the education of our children, and regard as the most essential task in life the observance of our laws and of the pious practices based thereupon, which we have inherited.* (Against Apion 1:60, Loeb ed.)

Although scrolls were used for reading and study and the practice of writing was highly developed, written material was expensive because all manuscripts had to be hand-copied by trained scribes. Scrolls, therefore, were relatively scarce, and even though in Jesus' time every Jewish home had at least one of the approximately twenty biblical scrolls, few people had immediate access to more than a very small part of the entire library of sacred literature. Learning, consequently, involved a great deal of memorization. Professor Safrai has written concerning educational methods of the period: Individual and group study of the Bible, repetition of the passages, etc., were often done by chanting them aloud. There is the frequent expression, "the chirping of children," which was heard by people passing close by a synagogue as the children were reciting a verse. Adults too, in individual and group study, often read aloud; for it was frequently advised not to learn in a whisper, but aloud. This was the only way to overcome the danger of forgetting. (The Jewish People in the First Century 2:953).

In the eyes of the sages, repetition was the key to learning, as these passages illustrate: *A person who repeats his lesson a hundred times is not to be compared with him who repeats it a hundred and one times. (Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 9b) If [the student] learns Torah and does not go over it again and again, he is like a man who sows without reaping.* (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a).

Many methods were used to assist the student in memorizing his lessons, and one passage in the Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 104a) even describes in detail the mnemonic devices employed to teach small children the Hebrew alphabet. Elementary school students, who studied seven days a week, were given no new material on the Sabbath, but rather used that time to memorize material learned earlier in the week (The Jewish People in the First Century 2:954).

Students enjoyed memorizing their lessons while strolling outdoors, but they were tempted to shift their attention to the surrounding scenery. The Mishnah specifically warns against this: *A person walking along the road repeating his lessons who interrupts his memorization and exclaims: "What a beautiful tree!" or "What a beautiful field!" it is imputed to him as if he were guilty of a crime punishable by death.* (Avot 3:8)

From accounts found in Jewish sources such as those referred to above, one can form a reasonably accurate picture of the Jewish religious culture and what Jewish children were doing in his childhood and adolescence. They were studying, committing to memory large amounts of material—Scripture and commentary on Scripture—all the available sacred literature of the day.

The memorization of Written and Oral Torah was such a large part of Jewish education that most contemporaries of Jesus' day had large portions of this material—at the least almost all of the Scriptures—firmly committed to memory. As Professor Safrai has stated:

*The Scriptures were known almost by heart by everyone. From quite early in the Second Temple period, one could hardly find a little boy in the street who didn't know the Scriptures. According to Jerome (342–420 A.D.) who lived in Bethlehem and learned Hebrew from local Jewish residents in order to translate the Scriptures into Latin [producing the Vulgate Bible]: "There doesn't exist any Jewish child who doesn't know by heart the history from Adam to Zerubbabel [i.e., from the beginning to the end of the Bible]." Perhaps this was a bit of an exaggeration on Jerome's part, but in most cases his reports have proved reliable. (Safrai, lecture on June 5, 1985)*

**Answer for yourself:** So what should we learn from this and what impact should it have on the "two short" sayings we find in the *Didache* which we cannot date with accuracy?

**Answer for yourself:** Should we assume then, now knowing the importance of memorization in Judaism, that these two short sayings which are later found to be "quoted" in the New Testament mean that there existed prior written 4 gospels from which these two referenced "sayings" came?



**Answer for yourself:** Or should we now better understand that these two short pity sayings in the *Didache* are reflective of an *remez* or an allusion to what others would have already have committed within their hearts and souls due to not only the prior teaching of Rabbis but their own personal study as well?

So we have our answer concerning these two explicit quotations found in the *Didache*.

## MORE ORAL TRADITION ALLUDED TO IN THE DIDACHE

Yet the *Didache* also contains three separate references to what the Lord commanded in the Gospel (xi. 3; xv. 3 and 4), as well as echoes from several other New Testament books.

*9:3 And concerning the broken bread. We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever.*

*15:3 Rebuke one another, not in wrath but peaceably, as ye have commandment in the Gospel; and, but let no one speak to any one who walketh disorderly with regard to his neighbour, neither let him be heard by you until he repent.*

*15:4 But your prayers and your almsgivings and all your deeds so do, as ye have commandment in the Gospel of our Lord.*

We can read where some scholars tell us that the author of the *Didache* gets these above passages from an existing gospel of Matthew in his day. To me this is ridiculous; especially in light of what we just learned about the role of memorization in Israel and Judaism. These "sayings" above speak loud and clear of a "received" oral tradition attributed to Jesus which was handed down. Unlike the two "quotes" above that are short and exact these sayings above are wordy; the first one taken as if coming from a prayer.

**Answer for yourself:** Instead of these two passages being taken from a "supposed" existing gospel is it not as likely or more likely in light of what we have learned that these three references are nothing more than a teaching based again upon inherited traditions of Jesus that came through successive oral tradition over the years? Can we find these above 3 passages "quoted" in the New Testament? No; but that is not to say that these teachings could have been written down much later and attributed to Jesus in a later New Testament. But the oral teaching of these "doctrines", which were later committed to writing in the *Didache*, do not presuppose the existence of the Gospel of Matthew as other might suppose. An analysis of these reminiscences shows only one thing and that is that the writer of the *Didache* was familiar also with phrases from oral tradition that was attributed to Jesus.

Some scholars go on record saying that within the *Didache* in its teaching on the eucharistic prayer (chaps. ix-x) that there seem to be faint echoes of the eucharistic passages which later show up in the Fourth Gospel (vi. 25-58) and of Jesus' prayer in John xvii, but, according to Bruce Metzger, the outstanding Christian New Testament scholar on the New Testament canon, they are not sufficiently precise to assure us that the author had read a copy or possessed a copy of the Gospel according to John. At most they reflect a tradition common to him again taken from oral tradition and not a previously existing written text or a then existing gospel of John.

By way of summary, we can see from the *Didache* that itinerant apostles and prophets still find an important place in the life of the Church, but this authority is declining. Their activity is surrounded with all sorts of precautions and rests ultimately on the authority of the traditional teaching deriving from the Lord, whose manner they must exhibit: "Not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, except he have the ways of the Lord. By their ways, then, the false prophet and the true prophet shall be distinguished" (xi. 8). The author refers to material that will later be incorporated into the gospel of Matthew which we have today, but he cites only words of Jesus and makes no mention of an existing "gospel" or names a "gospel by name."

**Answer for yourself:** Does not the Old Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures teach on false and true prophets? It sure does and plenty of it.

**Answer for yourself:** Could our writer again be gathering his material which is later recorded in the *Didache* from oral tradition concerning Rabbinical teachings or even Paul's teachings or early writings on false and true prophets? He sure could and most likely did.

**Answer for yourself:** What must again be our conclusion on this matter?

This "gospel", which is without doubt will later be the Gospel according to Matthew, is not regarded as a necessary source from which the words of the Lord, with indispensable warrants, come to the faithful, but quite simply as a convenient collection of these words which derive from oral tradition.

**This means that the 4 gospels we have in our day, since lacking mention by name, more than likely did not exist in the time of the writing of the *Didache*. The two quotes in the *Didache* which we dealt with above are easily seen as coming again from oral tradition. Lacking any explicit reference to any of our 4 gospels the only conclusion we can draw is that at the writing of the *Didache* our 4 gospels did not exist and any writer concerning Jesus or his "sayings" had to rely upon handed down oral tradition. We will have to wait until much later for early Christian writers to allude to their existence.**





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF PAPIAS

Among the first of those who show some interest in early Christian writings as well as in oral traditions was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, a city in which a Christian church had been established through the efforts of Epaphras, one of the apostle Paul's fellow workers (Col. 4:12-13). Next to nothing is known of Papias' life beyond the comment of Irenaeus (*Ad. Haer.* V. xxxiii. 3-4) that he was "a man of long ago" who had heard the apostle John preach and was also a friend of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. From this it appears that Papias must have lived from about A.D. 70 to about 140.

Papias is best remembered as the author of a treatise in five books entitled *Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord*, of which, unfortunately, only small fragments survive today. From the preface of this work it seems that Papias was eager to learn details of the life of Christ from living tradition, transmitted by disciples of the Lord. **Papias is supposed have heard, third hand, from the original apostles.** He listened to the stories of those who said they had received them from various persons. After stating that he was not so much concerned with the quantity of the tradition he could obtain but with its quality as corresponding to the truth, he continues:

*If ever anyone came who had been a follower of the presbyters I inquired into the words of the presbyters (ITALICS MINE...ORAL TRADITION), what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples had said (ITALICS MINE...ORAL TRADITION), and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying (ITALICS MINE...ORAL TRADITION). For I did not think that information from books would help me so much as the utterances of a living and surviving voice (ITALICS MINE...ORAL TRADITION).*

**Answer for yourself:** Would you not agree that Papias has little confidence in existing "books" concerning the "Lord" and rather trusts in the "oral traditions" existing his day concerning "the Christ"? It sure would seem that way considering what he personally wrote.

**Answer for yourself:** What books? Was Papias aware of existing gospels? Were these writings and "books" the same 4 gospels which we have today penned in the Apostles' names or could these be the early Gnostic gospels which Rome would purge almost out of existence? If these earliest "books" were the Gnostic Gospels that would explain possibly why Papias sought information elsewhere since by this time, the early second century, we are beginning to see among the Hellenistic branch of Christianity the emergence of the "literalist interpretation" of "the Christ". This emergence of the "literalistic human Christ" surfaces in refutation of the earlier understanding of the earliest Christians who believed in "the Gnostic Christ" and who did not believe in a "physical Christ" which we will only find later in the later Second New Testament of Irenaeus in 180 C.E.

**Answer for yourself:** Does Papias reference to "books" refer to passages in our current 4 Gospels which would indicate that these 4 gospels we have today were written early and not late as many modern scholars attest? If they refer to the Gnostic Gospels instead of our 4 Gospels then does this mean that the 4 Gospels we have accepted today were written late and were not penned by the Apostles whose names they carry today?

**From this quotation of Papias it is clear that the sayings of the Lord which Papias undertook to explain were drawn not only from written documents but also from oral tradition.** His informants of what Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and Matthew had said, or what Aristion and the presbyter John were saying, must have been Palestinian Christians who had emigrated to Asia Minor after the fall of Jerusalem in 70. They obviously enjoyed considerable prestige from the fact that they had lived in the same country with Jesus, and so were considered to be **bearers of a tradition that was particularly authentic and precious.** Papias thus recognized two sources of Christian tradition:

- **one was conveyed by word of mouth,**
- **the other was embodied in written gospels.**

That he preferred the "oral traditions" is without question and was due more to psychological than dogmatic reasons; later in the second century tastes would begin to shift from oral to written sources. **It is in the second century when we find the beginnings of the change from an oral to a written culture in the Mediterranean world, particularly during the early patristic period when literacy had not yet been deeply interiorized.**

According to Eusebius (*Hist. ecci.* iii. xxxix. 9), Papias had learned from the daughters of Philip (cf. Acts 21: 8) about the resurrection of a dead man in his [Philip's] own time. He also tells a tale about Justus Barsabbas' drinking a deadly poison without suffering any harm.

## **DID PAPIAS MENTION THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW?**

Well some Christian scholars tell us he did. Other say that he did not.

**Answer for yourself:** What is the truth about this?

Besides such oral traditions, which Papias delighted to collect, he also included in his *Expositions* two brief accounts about the composition of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. The notice he gives to the second is very brief, merely one sentence: ***"Matthew composed the sayings in a Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted (or, translated) them as best he could"*** (quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* III. xxxix. 16).

This enigmatic account refers, it is generally supposed, to one of the sources of the present Gospel according to Matthew, and may imply that the collecting of the sayings of Christ was attributed to Matthew because, in view of his earlier profession as tax collector, one could be sure that he knew how to write.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that many scholars tell us that the above reference to Matthew collecting the sayings of the "logia" is meant as the utterance of Old Testament prophets. In this case Matthew would have gathered little more than Old Testament proof-texts predicting the Messiah.

**Answer for yourself:** What is this "logia" which Papias mentions that Matthew wrote?

The question concerning the Logia Jesu, the Sayings of Jesus, taken in this restricted meaning, has become important on account of its connexion with the so-called **"Synoptic Problem"**. As to the contents of the Logia, scholars tell us that the work must have contained most matter common to Matthew and Luke, excluding that which these Gospels share with Mark. This material amounts to about one-sixth of the text of the Third Gospel, and two-elevenths of the text of the First Gospel. In these portions, the First and the Third Evangelists depend neither on Mark nor on each other; they must have followed the **Logia, a document now denoted by "Q"**. When Eusebius copied the words of Papias that ***"Matthew composed the Logia in Hebrew [Aramaic], and each one interpreted them as he was able"***, he probably understood them as referring to what would later be primarily contained in our First Gospel. But the critics insist that Papias must have understood his words as denoting a collection of the **"Sayings of Jesus", or the Logia (Q).**



As stated above Papias mentions that *"Mark had been the interpreter of Peter. Matthew put together the reports (logia, logia) in a Hebrew manner of speech dialect, style).*

The reference to Matthew's composition in "a (or, the) Hebrew dialect" is ordinarily taken to mean a Semitic language, either Hebrew itself or an Aramaic dialect. The suggestion that the expression should be understood merely as an account in Greek written in a Hebraic literary style does not take seriously the concluding reference to the difficulty one experienced in translating or interpreting the document.

This needs further explanation so pay close attention.

The Gospel of Matthew accepted into the canon of the church, the one we current have in our New Testaments, is written in Greek and not in Aramaic - Hebrew.

**Answer for yourself:** Could this be the same "gospel" that Papias referred to or is ours today a completely different "gospel"?

This means that, if one accepts the testimony of historical sources that Matthew originally wrote the "sayings" or "logia" of Jesus in Aramaic - Hebrew, then one must assume that at some point the original Hebrew/Aramaic Gospel of Matthew was translated into Greek. This seems reasonable at first, but this is possible only if one rejects the priority of Mark. If one assumes that the author of the Gospel of Matthew used the Gospel of Mark as a source, which is probable (rather than assuming that the Gospel of Mark is an abbreviation of Matthew or that they are literarily independent), it is impossible to hold that the canonical Gospel of Matthew is a translation of an original Aramaic/Hebrew version.

**Answer for yourself:** Then where is this Aramaic -Hebrew "logia" of Matthew today?

In this case, the logia that, according to Papias, Matthew composed, probably refers to something other than the Aramaic or Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Gospel of Matthew, but may nonetheless have some connection to it. It has been suggested that the logia are a sayings collection [the so-called Q-source], which, although originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew, were translated into Greek and became a source for the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

The idea of extemporaneous translations made from a Semitic original may have arisen when it became necessary to explain the divergences that would become apparent when one compared the Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and other Aramaic or Greek gospels that were related. We can detect here an apologetic intention in Papias' comment concerning Matthew's work.

Such apologetic interest is still more prominent in his comments on Mark-showing that criticisms directed against Mark were more pointed than those directed against Matthew. According to Papias, again as quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. ecci.* in. xxxix. 15),

*The presbyter used to say this: Mark, having become Peter's interpreter (perhaps "spokesman" or "secretary") wrote down accurately all that he remembered [of Peter's preaching] without, however, recording in order the things said or done by the Lord. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterwards, as I have said, [heard and followed] Peter, who adapted his discourse to the needs [of his hearers], but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's sayings, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing-to omit nothing of what he had heard or to falsify anything in them.*

From this account we can detect that three criticisms had been raised against Mark's Gospel:

- (a) Mark had not heard Jesus, nor had he followed him.
- (b) What he wrote lacked order, either rhetorical or chronological.

- **(c) His Gospel is incomplete.**

In reply to these criticisms, Papias states that the guaranty of the Gospel is furnished by Peter, and that the conditions under which it was written explain why it is without perfect order and presents some gaps-which are a kind of testimony to Mark's honesty in taking down all that Peter was accustomed to preach.

Other scattered evidence preserved by Eusebius, Jerome, Philip of Side, as well as several later Fathers, indicates that Papias knew the Fourth Gospel, i Peter, i John, and the Apocalypse. As for the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, we hear nothing in the extracts that have happened to survive.

By way of summary, Papias stands as a kind of bridge between the oral and the written stages in the transmission of the gospel tradition. Although he professes to have a marked preference for the oral tradition, one nevertheless sees at work the causes that, more and more, would lead to the rejection of that form of tradition in favour of written gospels. On the whole, therefore, the testimony of Papias concerning the development of the canon of the New Testament is significant chiefly in reflecting the usage of a community in which devotion to oral tradition hindered the development of a clear idea of canonicity.





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is a theological tract and an epistle only in appearance. Both Clement of Alexandria and Origen valued the work highly and attributed its composition to Barnabas, the companion and co-worker of the apostle Paul. But such attribution of authority is certainly mistaken, if only because the epistle implies that the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) took place some little time earlier (xvi. 3f.). The unknown author was probably a Christian teacher of Gentile origin who is concerned to prove that the death of Christ on the cross is a sacrifice that fulfills a plan set forth in the Old Testament (ix. 7-9).

This abstract discussion of Judaism is the sign of an epoch when the Judaizing controversies were already a thing of the past in the main body of the Church. In settling the date of the letter reference is often made to verses 3-5 of chapter four, where the writer, it is believed, finds the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 7:7, sqq.) in the succession of the Roman Emperors of his time. Starting from this, some critics place the composition of the epistle in the reign of Vespasian, others in the reign of Domitian, and still others in the reign of Nerva. But there is nothing to prove that the author considers the prophecy to be already accomplished. Besides, he might have taken the words of the prophecy to mean a series of kingdoms instead of a line of kings. It is necessary, therefore, to fall back on verses 3-5 of chapter xvi. Reference is here made to the command given by Adrian in A.D. 130 for the reconstruction, in honour of Jupiter, of the Temple at Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Titus. Adrian had also forbidden the Jews to practise circumcision. The writer of the letter makes allusion to this (ch. ix, 4). The epistle must, consequently, have been written in **A.D. 130-131.**

**Throughout his interpretation of the Old Testament he takes a radically anti-Jewish attitude that was unique in primitive Christian literature. In a sustained attack upon Judaism, the writer declares that the distinctive enactments of the Mosaic Law, including animal sacrifices and the material temple, are mistakes arising from Jewish blindness and reliance upon an evil angel (ix. 4). By means of allegorical interpretation the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas imposes upon the Old Testament, including even the dietary laws in Leviticus, a meaning totally foreign to the intention of the original authors.** In view of his fondness for such symbolic and typological interpretation, it is generally thought that the author was a resident in or near Alexandria. Most scholars think that the general tenor of the contents of the epistle suggests a date in the first half of the second century.

In his frequent quotations from the Old Testament, Barnabas is fairly exact in citing well-known contexts belonging to the Psalter and to the book of Isaiah, but elsewhere he appears to trust to memory, and not to concern himself greatly about the precise words of his author. There are nearly one hundred instances that involve formulas of quotation, most of which are general and vague; for example, "Scripture says", 'it is written', 'the prophet says', 'the Lord (or God) says (or said)', 'it (or he) says'. **Occasionally he refers to the book or speaker by name Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel.** This fact of mentioning a book by its author's name is very important for our study especially if we can find any references to the existence of the 4 Gospels in his epistles or the names of the writers of any possible existing written records or books or gospels existing in his day.

**Answer for yourself:** Are there any references to the 4 gospels being written or mention of the names of the authors of our 4 gospels which we have in our possession today? **NO!**

Besides quoting Old Testament prophets, the writer of the epistle of Barnabas also cites as prophets the authors of the Wisdom of Solomon (ii. 12), 2 Esdras (xii. I), and 2 Baruch (xi. 9f.), the last two of whom wrote during the early Christian era. He not only refers to Enoch in support for a prediction of the last times, but also quotes a statement from i Enoch with the formula 'For the Scripture says' (xvi. 5-6). **It is clear that, unlike other Apostolic Fathers, such as Hermas, Barnabas is a 'scholarly' author who has read widely and quotes frequently from a variety of books. The question arises, did his sources include any books of the New Testament; especially did the sources that he used include possibly the existing 4 gospels we have in our possession today.**

As regards the gospels, we find the following three passages which remind of what we will encounter later in the 4 gospels we have in our possession today.

(I) In vii. 3 he states that when Jesus was crucified 'he was given vinegar and gall to drink'. All four of our current Gospels mention that vinegar was offered to Jesus, but only Matthew (27:4) refers to 'wine mixed with gall' being also given.

**Answer for yourself:** Can this mention of an event which was widely known from oral tradition be considered a "quote" from an existing written gospel in his day? **No. A simple reference to an event does not necessitate that we assume or believe that a written record or one of our 4 gospels existed in his day from which he got his references. Again we must appeal, considering the illiteracy prevalent in his day among the masses of Gentiles, that he recalls such an event from memory and oral tradition. Surely the passion narrative was well known in his day and many would have heard the story of the gall and vinegar.**

We must also not that it is also possible that Barnabas, looking for Old Testament types and prophecies, was influenced by *Ps. 69:21* ('*They gave me gall for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*') rather than by the possible existence of Matthew's account which might have been in existence in his day. **We can only say that the writer of Barnabas, a fluent scholar, did not mention any written record from the Apostle Matthew for his source of this part of his epistle.**

(2) In iv. 14 Barnabas exhorts his readers to take heed 'lest haply we be found, as it is written, "many are called, but few are chosen"'. **While this looks very much like a quotation from Matthew (22:14), it is also just possible, as some think, that Barnabas and Matthew are drawing upon a common source and oral tradition again for the saying, whose proverbial character seems proved by its having been added to Matt. 20:20:16 in many manuscripts (C D N W Fam.1 Fam.13 et al.).** So we find in this example a reference to later Christian tampering with later manuscripts whereby they "add" to the manuscript; sadly a common practice whereby many "doctrines" are later instituted into the texts we think and both taught came from God. **So this reference cited above, which some want to say is a "quote" or "reference to an existing gospel of Matthew" is nothing more than an a saying again taken from "oral tradition" which is later incorporated into existing New Testament texts at a later time.**

(3) Barnabas knows also that Jesus 'came not to call the righteous but sinners' (v. 9), a statement that occurs verbatim in Matthew (9:13) and in Mark (2:17). Of course the theme of "repentance" is not new in Judaism; especially in light of the occupation of Israel by Rome which was viewed as a judgment of God upon Israel by the sages and Rabbis. So such a "saying" would not have been unusual to say the least and does not again, in the lack of other concrete evidences substantiating the existence of written gospels, presuppose that a written gospel existed at that time from which such a saying was taken.

**The only conclusion a "thinking believer" can have when viewing such evidence is the fact that we**



**have the recording of "sayings taken from oral traditions" and not "quotes" lifted from an existing written gospel in that day which is one of our 4 current gospels today.**

Whether Barnabas knew the Fourth Gospel is much less certain. In the context of discussing the bronze serpent that Moses was told to put on a pole (Num. 21:7f.), Barnabas declares (xii. 7) that here we have again 'the glory of Jesus' which is an apparent allusion to John 3:14.

*John 3:14 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (KJV)*

Again we know not for certain is such an allusion to Jesus and Moses is any proof that such an analogy was written later from an existing oral tradition or remez. **But "echoes" of Old Testament events as applied to Jesus were more likely oral traditions that first circulated among believers in various areas long before they were later written down and appear in our later 4 gospels. We have to be careful that parallels with Moses which were applied to Jesus by the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas which were first from oral tradition is not misunderstood as written sources when they were not. Let us not forget the importance of "Q" as the oral source from which much is later written. An "echo" does not guarantee the existence of written gospels in the time period of the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas. Echoes of sayings in the Epistle of Barnabas which seem to relate to passages we later find in 1st and 2nd Timothy, which the scholars tell us was written much later and forged in Paul's name, does not guarantee or is proof that such "sayings" were taken from any of our 4 gospels which existed in his day. Again the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas mentions no gospel or gospel writer by name which is surprising if these gospels existed in his day. Wanting authority for their presentation of Jesus such references to the gospels which were written in various Apostle's names would have been great ammunition of the evangelism of their faith in Jesus but we find none.** Again, the statement that according to Old Testament prophets it was ordained that the Lord was to 'be made manifest in the flesh' (v. 6) may echo the first line of what is often taken as an early creedal statement preserved in 1 Tim. 3:16, *'He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, etc.'* These are typical anti-Gnostic statements and creedal statements that come to be later written in refutation of early Gnostic Christianity and "the Christ" of the Gnostics which long predated the emergence of anti-Gnostic religious literature but we are on the verge of their development with the Epistle of Barnabas in 130 A.D.

Some Christian apologists believe that it is possible that Barnabas knew of 2 Timothy, for his mention of 'grace', 'manifested', and 'the destruction of death' (v. 6) recalls a similar combination of words in 2 Tim. 1:9-10.

*2 Tim 1:9-10 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (KJV)*

But if you look at the verses from 2 Tim. 1:9-10 it is hard to say that the reiteration of 3 isolated words is proof of the early writing of the 4 gospels. Again the circulating oral tradition concerning Jesus surely contained within it references to "grace" and early Christology as Jesus was believed by many to be the "manifestation" of God in the flesh. Some saw this allegorically and some "literally". Yet again understanding the passion story one has no difficulty noticing that the oral tradition surely would have contained the idea that Jesus' death abolished "death" for his followers who "believed" in him. So again the oral tradition is easily seen to be the vehicle for these doctrines which later we find in written records given the name 2 Timothy after 130 A.D. The same epistle seems to be echoed in the reference to the Son of God as the Lord and 'Judge of the living and the dead' (2 Tim. 4:1; Barn. vii. 2), unless in both cases a common formula of Christian faith is cited independently.

**We need to bring to the attention of the reader that the Pastoral Epistles are comprised of three letters which sound the least like Paul (as we know him from the Authentic Letters); in fact, the**

language and content sometimes directly contradict what is found in the Authentic Letters. Few biblical critics believe these were written by Paul. They were probably written by a particular community that Paul had founded that held certain interpretations of Paul's teachings, perhaps even interpretations that disagreed with other Pauline Christians. They are very socially conservative, and may have been written a generation or two after Paul's death (perhaps as late as 125 C.E.-135 C.E.)

So based upon what we see here then most likely we still don't have in our possession our 4 gospels in written form as we do today and these allusions to "sayings" of Jesus come from oral traditions and not the 4 Apostolic gospels we have today.

By way of summary, one can see that for Barnabas the Scriptures are what we call the Old Testament, including several books outside the Hebrew canon. Most of his sayings that for us today are "echoes" of later verses in our New Testaments are nothing more than oral traditions and nothing more to which he alludes. These "simple sentences" were well known to a Christian of that time from oral tradition. As against the single instance of his using the formula, 'it is written', in introducing the statement, *'Many are called, but few are chosen'*, must be placed his virtual neglect of exact quotes later found in the New Testament. If he were copying texts in his Epistle of Barnabas then he fails since his few references are so vague that no one in their right mind can assume that a gospel existed from which he drew. We are again left with the oral tradition for the "sayings" of Jesus. If, on the other hand, he wrote shortly before or after 130, the focus of his subject-matter would not make it necessary to do much quoting from New Testament books-if indeed he knew many of them. In either case he provides little or no evidence for the development of the New Testament canon.





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

[The epistle that Polycarp](#), bishop of Smyrna, wrote to the Christians at Philippi is intimately connected with the epistles and martyrdom of Ignatius. About A.D. 110 while en route to Rome where he suffered martyrdom, Ignatius passed through Smyrna and was warmly greeted by the church and its bishop. Subsequently he was taken by his guards to Philippi, where local Christian leaders visited him. After his departure they wrote to Polycarp requesting him to send them copies of the epistles that Ignatius had written to him and to several churches in Asia Minor. This he did, adding a kind of covering letter of his own (xiii. 2). In this Polycarp urges his readers to stand fast in the faith (chaps. iv-vi), to avoid heretical teachings (chap. vii), to look to the examples of martyrdom suffered by Ignatius and others (chap. ix), and to persevere in philanthropy and good works (chap. x). He concludes by saying that he is sending them copies of the epistles of Ignatius, as they requested, and asks them to send him the latest news about Ignatius and his companions (xiii. 2).

A problem arises when one compares this last request which implies that Ignatius "and those who are with him" have not yet suffered martyrdom with Polycarp's earlier statement (ix. if.) concerning the faithfulness and fortitude of Ignatius and other Christian martyrs, who are now with the Lord. In 1936 P. N. Harrison attempted to reconcile the two passages by the theory that the present epistle really consists of two epistles: one, a short note (chaps. xiii-xiv), written not long after Ignatius had been taken to Rome for martyrdom, and the other (chaps. i-xii), written at a time of crisis in the Philippian church, **perhaps about AD. 135**. These two epistles, Harrison argued, were later combined into one. While this theory has gained approval from a number of scholars, there is, however, no compelling reason for dating the second epistle as late as 135; a year or so after the first epistle would satisfy the internal evidence of the text. In fact, it is altogether possible that Polycarp treats Ignatius' zeal for martyrdom as so certain to reach its goal that he can speak of death as already accomplished; in this case there was one epistle, written early rather than late. In any case, however, the difference between **110 and 135** is not very great. **This gives us a good window to see if we can determine if from the sources from Polycarp if there existed in his day any of our 4 written gospels as church tradition maintains.**

We now approach a very important point in time when we look at the few years between the time of Ignatius and Polycarp. These twenty-five years, or as some feel that the time period is closer to 130 A.D., we encounter larger number of references to "sayings" which will soon find their way into written records; in particular the New Testament. For example we find that Polycarp has two or three times more reminiscences of "oral traditions" and "sayings" of the Lord which we later find in the New Testament than does Ignatius; of 112 short Biblical reminiscences, about one hundred can be found to be existing in rather general allusions in the later New Testament or as exact quotes. Again from what we have learned scriptures, especially short ones, were committed to memory and provided the first teachings about Jesus. Oral traditions were very important as the carriers of religious doctrines before the written word. We find only a few references to the Old Testament in Polycarp; a dozen to be exact. These "reminiscences" and "sayings" from Polycarp enable us to gain a rather precise idea of the authority that Polycarp recognized in them.

**For certain we know from Polycarp that he assumes that a body of teaching, oral or written and**

similar to the Sermon on the Mount, was familiar to the Philippian church.

*Remember what the Lord taught when he said, "Do not judge, that you may not be judged; forgive and you will be forgiven; be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; the measure you give will be the measure you get"; and "Blessed are the poor, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God" (ii. 3).*

This portion taken from Polycarp reads just like the Sermon on the Mount to which we have in our New Testaments today. But again we saw that the Sermon on the Mount was not "new" teachings to the Jews and that Jesus, when teaching them, used a Rabbinical method of teaching called remez where he alludes back to something that they already knew. This is only a "refresher" and not breaking new doctrine. So we should expect that not only that audience was already familiar with such saying but more than likely already had many if not all of them already committed to their memory when they heard it taught once again.

Here in Polycarp we find a combination of Matt. 7:1-2 and Luke 6:36-8., but there are also some elements that are not present in the canonical Gospels. The second part of the passage is a combination of two of Jesus' beatitudes (Matt. 5:3 and 10). In both cases the words are cited as the words of Jesus and not as Scripture. Again in presenting these "sayings" of Jesus Polycarp feels no need to guarantee the words he cites by the authority of the evangelists who report them. He fails to mention an existing Gospel of Matthew or even mention that what he is relating to them comes from a writing attributed to an Apostle in Jesus' inner circle. Such an attestation would have spoken of the authority for such teachings and again like all Christian writers that have come before Polycarp no mention of an Apostle or his writings can be found! And let us remember the date is roughly 130-135 A.D.

In another case the citation is textual:

*Let us persevere in fasting, and beseech the all-seeing God 'not to lead us into temptation', even as the Lord said, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak' (vii. 2).*

This last statement is drawn from Matt. 24:41 and is expressly presented as a word of the Lord. It is significant also that, in the preceding phrase, Polycarp reproduces a petition from the Lord's Prayer without mentioning its origin.

**Answer for yourself:** Is the "Lord's Prayer" a shortened version of the Amidah which every Jew had committed to memory? Yes it is but that is a study for another day. But understand we should expect such phrases taken from the "Lord's Prayer" to be committed to memory and so its mention in Polycarp does not mean that he had to have taken this reference from an existing written document. Polycarp took it from again oral tradition.

The 'word of the Lord' supplies authority by its own content and because it comes from the Lord. The authority of the Jewish Bible and the Hebrew Scriptures are falling by the wayside. We are seeing before our face the change from the authority of the Jewish Scriptures to the sayings and oral traditions attached to Jesus which were at this time handed down mainly by oral tradition. The Church is separating from her Jewish Roots with rapidity.

I suggest that you take a moment and read the Epistle of Polycarp and determine for yourself if he is "quoting" and existing Gospel or if he is only alluding to a group of "memorized sayings" from which the early Church was built.

In his warning against heresy (vii. i) the ringing declaration, *'Everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an antichrist'*. We find this later in I John 4:2-3.



**Answer for yourself:** What should this tell us? We have seen throughout this website that there are two different New Testaments; one early and one later which tried to change much that existed in the earliest New Testament. Gnosticism and the Gnostic Christ which is the foundational teaching of the First New Testament is altered by the additional forgeries that come later then replace much which was in the earliest New Testament. Of importance is the issue of the "Gnostic Christ" which was never believed to be a human being or a "fleshly" Christ. We see before us at 135 the refutation of the earlier Gnostic Christian beliefs in "the Christ" and the beginning of the emphasis upon a "fleshly Christ" or a "fleshly Jesus". Concurrent with this time, give or take 5 years or so, is the presentation of Marcion and his First New Testament which does not teach a human Jesus or a human Christ. Remember from prior study that Marcion espouses Paul and his "Gnostic Christ" as well. These events all transpire long before the emergence of the "fleshy Christ" and the "fleshly Jesus" later in the Second New Testament. Momentum for this change in "the Christ" begins right here in Polycarp as you can see from the above reference. Here they equate one being "an antichrist" if you do not believe in a "fleshly Jesus". The battle between Gnostic Christianity and "literal" Roman Christianity is beginning to be found in print in this day and this battle of "pens" will be waged for centuries. Important for us is that in 180 A.D. we find the emergence of Irenaeus' Second New Testament and the "fleshly Jesus" has replaced through forgery the Gnostic Christian's understanding of "the Christ". Over the next 5 centuries these Gnostic Christians and their "Christ within" will be murdered and almost exterminated along with all their writings and their Scriptures. This "fleshly Jesus" will eventually win out aided by the Emperor and the might of pagan Rome. But this explains why I hope you see that in the earliest written collection of Paul' writings and the "Q" that we find no mention of the genealogies of Jesus, infancy narratives, birth narratives, childhood stories, as well as no Pastoral epistles until late for they as well will emerge and contradict the early Paul by attributing to Paul a "fleshy Jesus" when he never taught one.

**Answer for yourself:** How far did Polycarp consider these and other similar statements made by the apostles to be 'Scripture'?

It is possible that he does so on one occasion when he remarks, '*As it is said in these Scriptures, "Be ye angry and sin not" and "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath"'* (xii. i). The former of these two quotations comes from Ps. 4:5, and both occur together in Eph. 4:26 - an epistle which he knows and alludes to several times elsewhere. The words 'these Scriptures' and the linking word 'and' seem to imply that Polycarp regards himself as making two separate quotations. Most scholars see that Polycarp is referring to the Psalms as "Scriptures" from which he draws one example. The conjunction "and" only groups these two sayings together. He is therefore not calling an oral tradition ("Let not the sun go down upon your wrath") Scriptures as he had for the Psalms.

Since, however, this is the only place where he designates as "Scripture" or even alludes to a saying from the Jesus oral traditions ("Q") which will later be in our New Testament, some have argued that Polycarp, quoting from memory, mistakenly attributes both passages to the Old Testament. It is difficult to decide firmly among these several ways of understanding Polycarp's words, but the first mentioned has the advantage of taking his statement in its natural sense.

By way of summary, the short *Epistle of Polycarp* contains proportionately far more allusions to what we are more familiar with in the New Testament. The oral traditions of the "sayings of the Lord" will later be written down and attributed to the Apostles. As for the Gospels, he cites as sayings of the Lord many phrases which will later be found in our current gospels of Matthew and Luke. But he fails to mention their existence in his day or give any reference or credit to an Apostolic writer for a written record of Jesus' sayings. In other words he mentions no gospel by name nor its writer. Again this would have contributed a greater authority for what he had to say but yet we find none; not surprising because these 4 gospels had not been written and they were not known in 135 C.E.

At the same time Polycarp's mind is not only saturated with ideas and phrases derived from a considerable number of writings that later came to be regarded as New Testament Scriptures. In

were the gospels written early...the testimony of polycarp

**closing Polycarp clearly differentiates the apostolic age from his own time. The emerging church is crawling out from under its Jewish Roots and covering with the lack of reliance upon the Jewish Scriptures and the increasing importance attributed to the "sayings of the Lord" which come at this time primarily from an oral tradition.**





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS OF ROME

One of the most popular books produced in the early Church was the *Shepherd* of Hermas. Not only was it frequently quoted and for a time regarded as inspired, but more than twenty separate parchment or papyrus fragments, dating from the second to the sixth centuries, have survived of the Greek text, as well as portions of it in two Latin versions (of the second and the fourth/fifth century respectively) and in two Coptic versions (Sahidic and Achmimic). There is also a paraphrastic Ethiopic translation, and scraps in Middle Persian were found among the Manichaean texts from Turfan. The date that scholars agree for its writing is around the year 150 C.E. or the middle of the second century.

The book is a picturesque religious allegory, in most of which a rugged figure dressed like a shepherd is Hermas' guide. The *Shepherd of Hermas* was one of the most popular books produced in the early Church, and for a time it was frequently quoted and regarded as inspired. The book is a picturesque religious allegory, in most of which a rugged figure dressed like a shepherd is Hermas' guide. From this the book took its name, 'The Shepherd'. Comprising a rambling account of 5 Visions, 12 Mandates, and 10 Similitudes, the book is characterized by strong moral earnestness. It is primarily a call to repentance and adherence to a life of strict morality, addressed to Christians among whom the memory of persecution is still fresh., and over whom now hangs the shadow of another great tribulation.

Although Origen and Jerome thought the author of the *Shepherd* to be the Hermas mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans (14:14), internal and external evidence alike points to an author who lived at a somewhat later date. The writer indicates that he is contemporary with a certain Clement who has had the function of communicating with believers in other cities (*Vis.* ii. 4). If, as would seem probable, we are to identify this Clement with the bishop of Rome who wrote to the church at Corinth about A.D. 96, then the *Shepherd* would have to be placed at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. On the other hand, according to a statement in the Muratorian Canon (Appendix IV. 1 below; the point recurs in the *Liberian Catalogue*, also known as "The Chronographer of 354) our author was a brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, who died about 154. The presence of certain literary and theological differences within the book has long puzzled commentators, several of whom have suggested multiple authorship. Perhaps the least unsatisfactory resolution of the conflicting evidence is to suppose that Hermas was a younger contemporary of Clement and wrote (and perhaps published) sections of his rambling treatise at intervals over a considerable period of time, finally gathering them together in one volume toward the middle of the second century. It must be acknowledged, however, that in view of the lack of conclusive evidence and amid conflicting interpretations among scholars who have given attention to the *Shepherd*, the problem of its date continues to be unresolved.

The personality of Hermas is clearly revealed in the book. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* he relates all manner of intimate details concerning himself and his family. We learn that, as a Christian slave, he had been sold in Rome to a woman called Rhoda, who set him free. As a freedman he married, acquired a fortune (though not always

by lawful transaction), and through ill luck had again been reduced to poverty. He tells us that during the persecution his children apostatized, that they betrayed their own parents, and that they led a disorderly life. Hermas depicts himself as slow of understanding, but insatiable in curiosity (*Mand.* xii. 4, *Sim.* v. 5), and at the same time as 'patient and good tempered, and always smiling', 'full of all simplicity and of great guilelessness' (*Vis.* i. 2). We may conclude that he was a simple man of limited outlook, but genuinely pious and conscientious. At any rate, his book was highly esteemed in the early Church for its moral value, and, according to Athanasius, served as a textbook for catechumens. In fact, in parts of the Church during the second and third centuries it was sometimes regarded as inspired Scripture-so, for example, by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. In codex Sinaiticus, a fourth-century copy of the Greek Bible, the *Shepherd* (with the *Epistle of Barnabas*) stands after the close of the New Testament.

Hermas makes no definite quotation from either Old or New Testament. At the same time, however, here and there one detects echoes of our familiar "oral tradition" which we have seen up to now which will later be reduced to writing in the 4 gospels which we have today.

We find in the *Shepherd* words and ideas which are in groupings not accurate to the later New Testament of Irenaeus but which give the idea again this the writer of the *Shepherd* is acquainted with the oral tradition and the sayings of Jesus which were circulated via memory in his day. In *Sim.* ix. 12, the declaration that one enters the kingdom of God only by receiving the Name of the Son of God equates to what we find later in the Gospel of John 3:18. In *Sim.* ix. 20, Hermas, thinking of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, declares that those involved in much business are like thorns, and are choked by their business transactions. 'Such persons', he concludes, 'will have difficulty in entering into the kingdom of God.' But though the rich have difficulty entering the kingdom (cf. Matt. 19:23 ff.), the childlike will live free from wickedness in a state of innocence and will, 'without doubt, dwell in the kingdom of God' (*Sim.* ix. 29ff.). We must remember that in the absence of any citation of a gospel by name or an allusion to a gospel verse more exact than just a rough parallel does not guarantee or warrant that we suppose the existence of the existence of a written gospel which we have in our possession today. These example above are nothing more than just allusions to circulating oral traditions of the sayings of Jesus which the writer of the *Shepherd* alludes.

That is not the case when in the middle of the second century we encounter more exact allusions to the Pauline Epistles however. It is likely that Eph. 4:3--6, which enjoins peace and unity in one body and one Spirit, supplied Hermas with ideas concerning the ideal state for the members of the Church. In *Sim.* ix. 13 he twice alludes to believers as those who become or possess 'one spirit and one body'. In *Sim.* ix. 17 Hermas declares that those who have been baptized 'have one understanding and one mind, and their faith became one and their love one', and in ix. 18 he looks forward to the time when the Church, having been purified, will become 'one body, of one mind, of one understanding, of one faith, of one love'. We know Paul wrote his 7 authentic Epistles during his life so when we find parallel thoughts and ideas it is not a stretch to see their influence in the writing of later Christian writers but up to now we have no explicit evidence for the existence of the 4 gospels let alone any definitive and concrete reference to their existence.

The coincidence of Hermas with expressions in the Epistle of James are exceedingly numerous, and whole sections of the *Shepherd* seem to have been framed with evident recollection of that Epistle (for example, *Vis.* iii. 9; *Mand.* ii. 9; *Sim.* v. 4) The word ("double-minded"), which in the New Testament occurs only in James (1:8 and 4:8) and not in the Septuagint or anywhere in secular Greek, seems to have caught Hermas' fancy; he uses it 19 times, as well as the cognate verb 20 times, and the substantive 16 times.

By way of summary, it is obvious that Hermas was not given to making quotations from literature; in fact, the only actual book anywhere named and quoted in the *Shepherd* (*Vis.* ii. 3) is an obscure Jewish apocalypse known as the book of *Eldad and Modad*. Despite reminiscences from oral traditions which we later will find written by the writer of the gospel of Matthew and the possible references to the Epistles of Ephesians, and James, Hermas makes no comment that would lead us to think that he regarded them as canonical Scripture. From the testimony contained in the *Shepherd*, it can in any case be observed



were the gospels written early: the testimony of the shepherd of hermas

**how uneven during the course of the second century was the development of the idea of the canon. Up to now the Scriptures for the Christian Church was the Hebrew Scriptures; the Old Testament.**



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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT

The writing that goes by the name of the "Second Epistle of Clement" is neither an epistle nor a genuine work of Clement of Rome. The writer distinctly states (chap. xix) that he is reading aloud and that he is doing so in a religious meeting. Clearly we have here an early Christian sermon. The style is different from that of *First Clement*; it is less elegant, and the preacher does not refer to himself in the first person plural (as is the habit of the author of *First Clement*), but employs the singular form. Furthermore, the writer contrasts himself and his hearers with the Jewish nation in a manner quite unlike the genuine Clement, and his quotations are not, like Clement's, almost exclusively from the Old Testament, but frequently include references to gospel history.

Both the date and place of composition are difficult to determine. In the absence of any direct references to contemporary events, the most that one can do is to consider its place in the general development of Christian doctrine. On this basis it has been generally **assigned to the half century between A.D. 120 and 170, and within these limits  $\pm$  150 is usually accepted**. Still more uncertain is its place of origin. Its traditional association with *First Clement* suggests a Roman origin, and Harnack attributed it to Pope Soter (A.D. 166-70). Others (as F. X. Funk, G. Kruger) have supposed that it had been a favorite sermon with the Corinthians, who kept reading it in church along with *First Clement*, and so the two came to be associated together. Still others (J. R. Harris, J. V. Bartlet, B. H. Streeter) have assigned it to Alexandria, for the unknown author includes quotations that remind one of the ***Gospel of the Egyptians*** and the Greek ***Gospel of Thomas***, both of which were of Egyptian provenance. As can be appreciated, none of these proposals rests on sufficiently compelling evidence to warrant drawing a firm conclusion, and so the question of the historical context of *Second Clement* must be left unresolved.

The main object of the author of *2 Clement* is to inculcate personal holiness of life, and in support of his teaching he frequently appeals to the Old Testament and to the **"words of the Lord"**. In the case of the Old Testament he sometimes identifies the passages he cites by mentioning the name of the author, as, for example, Isaiah (3:5) or Ezekiel (6:8). **In the case of the New Testament, however, though he is obviously acquainted with the oral traditions which find their way eventually into the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke much later around 180 A.D., he never cites them as the narratives of the Evangelists.** In such cases his favorite formula of introduction is **"the Lord says"**. Thus, in support of his exhortation to practise good works, he quotes as a saying of the Lord, **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall be saved, but the one who does righteousness"** (4:2), which we will find later incorporated at the close of the Matthean form of the Sermon on the Mount when the Gospel of Matthew surfaces in 180 A.D. (Matt. 7:21).

A little more remote from what is preserved in the canonical Gospels is the statement, **"The Lord said, 'My brethren are those who do the will of my Father'"** (9:2). Here we seem to have a fusion of the structure of Luke 8:21 ("My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do its) with the phrasing of Matt. 12:49f. ("Behold my mother and my brethren! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my



brother, and sister, and mother"). Again these are easily accounted for as taken from an existing oral tradition in light of the failure to cite either of the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of Luke as the sources for such statements when Second Clement was written. Let us remember the time frame of which we are concerned is 120-170 A.D. and we find no mention of either of these two Gospels which surely would have been mentioned had they existed at that time.

Similarly 2 Clement makes a composite quotation of Matt. 6:24 (or Luke 16:13) with Luke 9:25: *"The Lord says, 'No servant can serve two masters.' If we desire to serve both God and mammon, it is unprofitable to us. 'For what is the advantage if someone gains the whole world but loses one's soul'"* (6:1-2). Again the failure to document such a saying by mentioning the existence of either the Gospel of Matthew or Luke leads us to the similar conclusion that such phrases and sayings came from an existing oral tradition of the sayings of the Lord which were either the Q source or possibly Papias Logia but surely not either of our 4 Gospels or else they would have been mentioned by name to bolster their authority as coming from the Apostles.

In other cases Second Clement cites as words of the Lord clauses and whole sentences that are not preserved in our canonical Gospels. This is proof positive of an existing collection of sayings of the Lord that were in circulation in his day and again weights in as more evidence to the lack of existence of the 4 Gospels in the days when Second Clement was written.

We have, however, no data for determining the source of these words or sayings used by the writer of Second Clement. Their length and style seem to indicate that they were possibly derived from writings and possibly not from oral tradition, but no other trace of the conversation has been preserved. Many scholars believe that these sayings if not taken from oral traditions of the teachings of "the Christ" were possibly taken from the Logia of Papias which was the written account of Levi in Hebrew. We simply don't know for sure and may never will.

Another citation still more remote from the canonical accounts is the following:

*For when the Lord himself was asked by someone when his kingdom would come, he said: "When the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female [is] neither male nor female" (xii. 2).*

This citation reminds one of logion 22 in the *Gnostic Gospel of Thomas*:

*They [the disciples] said to him, "Shall we, being children, enter the kingdom"" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and make the inside like the outside, and the outside like the inside, and the upper side like the under side, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female will [not] be female."*

Since part of this saying also occurs in the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, where it is expanded and presented as Jesus' reply to a query posed by Salome, it may be concluded that 2 Clement has drawn upon a piece of oral tradition that also found embodiment in the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of the Egyptians. Of the three developments of the same saying, its precise wording, according to Baarda's detailed analysis, is probably best preserved in 2 Clement.

There remains one other citation of Jesus' words that, unlike those so far examined, is identified as "Scripture". Immediately after quoting a passage from the Old Testament (Isa. 54:1), the author continues, "Another Scripture also says 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners'" (2:4). Since the parallelism with Matt. 9:13 and Mark 2:17 is exact, the citation seems to show that the author of Second Clement regarded the sayings of "the Lord" as Scripture, on a par with Isaiah.

In xiv. 2 we find an important but somewhat imprecise reference to the authorities from which the author of 2

**Clement** derives his teaching. In developing an allegorical understanding of the pre-existence of the Church, he relies upon "the books and the apostles". What did our author mean by these two terms taken in tandem? Although it is unlikely that he had given much reflection to the matter, by the term "the books" he would undoubtedly have meant the Old Testament, for he has just finished quoting Jer. 7:2 and Gen. 1:27. At the same time, however, it is significant that he does not venture to include any existing apostolic documents under the rubric, "the books", i.e. his Bible. No mention of any of our 4 Gospels can be found in anything that the writer of *Second Clement* wrote.

**Answer for yourself:** Since we have only the authentic 7 epistles of Paul and the Gnostic Gospels in existence at this time then could these Gnostic writings be grouped as "Scripture" in the minds of the writer of *Second Clement*?

By way of recapitulation, the unknown author of 2 *Clement* certainly knew of an existing oral traditions of "the Christ" and possibly an unknown written source which we have to rely solely upon speculation to arrive at any identify. We theorize it could have been Matthew's Hebrew Logia but we are not sure. This definitely was not the Gospel of Matthew we have which was written in Greek and surfaces in 180 A.D. for the first time in written form. There is, at this late date, simply no explicit reference to any existing written Gospel of the 4 of which we are familiar with today. There is no trace of the Johannine Gospel or other Epistles, or of the Book of Acts. Of the eleven times that he cites words of Jesus, five are not to be found in the canonical Gospels. The presence of these latter, as well as the citation in 11: 2-4 of an apocryphal book of the Old Testament, introduced as "the prophetic word", shows that our homilist's quotations of divinely authoritative words are not controlled by any strict canonical idea, even in relation to Old Testament writings.





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# WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF & THE SILENCE OF JUSTIN MARTYR

We finished the prior article by examining the astonishing lack of quotes of the New Testament in early Christian literature up until the middle second century (roughly 150 A.D.). **This is absolutely amazing when you see the silence of early Church writers as to any reference to the existence of "any" of the Four Gospels which we today are told to believe were written early and by the Apostles of Jesus. Such is not the case upon examination of early Patristic Literature.**

## THE TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR...OR THE LACK THERE OF...

We need a little background on Justin before we begin for he is a very important writer in early Christianity.

Apart from the inspired New Testament writings, Justin's 1st Apology is perhaps the single most valuable work of early Christianity. It furnishes detailed descriptions of church services, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. **These descriptions by Justin Martyr are among some of the earliest we have of the emerging proto-Catholic Gentile Church of the second century as it makes its successful break from a Jewish mother church.** The value of this apology is enhanced by the fact that it was not written by some "church father" trying to tell the church what to teach or how to conduct its worship services. Instead, it was simply written by an evangelist explaining to the Romans what Christians believed and how they conducted their meetings. Throughout his work, Justin repeatedly uses the expression, ***"We have been taught..."*** He was not the teacher; he was simply relating what he and other Christians had learned.

In the end, Justin's witness for Christ did cost him his life. A group of philosophers plotting against him had him arrested and sentenced to death. Choosing to die rather than to renounce Christ, Justin was executed in about 165 A.D. After his death, he became known as Justin the Martyr, or simply Justin Martyr.

Now let us really get into Justin and his writings and see what we can discover. Now we move to Justin Martyr about **one hundred twenty years following the death of Jesus (roughly 150 A.D.). We again find no evidence of the existence of the Four Gospels. Justin Martyr flourished about 150 A.D.** He is really the first writer who laid aside tradition, and **appealed to records.** In his works he frequently quotes from the Old Testament, and from what ***appears, at first sight, to be the New Testament,*** and the most strenuous exertions have been put forth by Christian apologists to show that he had our Four Gospels. But they utterly fail.

***Please pay close attention.***

Justin makes three hundred and fourteen (314) quotations from the Old Testament, and in one hundred ninety-seven of these (197) -that is, in 2/3 of the cases, he names the book from which he is quoting. But in making his so-called New Testament quotations, he does not mention the name of any one of our Four Gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you understand what I just shared with you? Justin made it a habit of quoting the Old Testament books by name when he quoted from them, but when quoting what one would believe to be "New Testament" quotes he NEVER mentions the name of the book from which the quotation comes.

One of the more impressive things about Justin is his thorough knowledge of Scripture. In his First Apology alone, Justin quotes more than 155 Bible verses. That may not seem very remarkable, except that he quotes entirely from memory. Justin's grasp of the Bible is almost unbelievable. In his apology, he deftly rattles off prophecy after prophecy from the Old Testament. Even though quoting from memory, he nearly always attributes these prophecies to the correct persons. Many of his quotations follow almost verbatim the Greek Septuagint text (the Old Testament), the standard translation of the Old Testament used by the early Christians. Of course, since he wrote entirely from memory, Justin occasionally attributes a verse to the wrong prophet or makes a minor historical error. For example, he refers to Jethro as being Moses' uncle instead of his father-in-law. Yet such errors are remarkably few.

Now we come to the New Testament where we find not one explicit reference to a written gospel by name. He mentions not once any of the 4 gospels by name or quotes from them or references his allusions to a written text; therefore as before we see Justin dependent upon the "oral tradition" as he alludes to the "sayings" or "Q" by memory alone. On the other hand, he states, distinctly and repeatedly, that the reference from which he is alluding is the "Memoirs of the Apostles" (Apol. I. 66-67; Dial. C. Tryp. 100-104, 106), or the "Memoirs," "all things concerning Jesus Christ" (Apol., i. 33). He also quotes from the "Acts of Pilate" (Apol. I. 35, 48), giving the name of the book, and he refers to the "Memoirs or the Gospel of Peter" (Dial., 106). But absent from all allusions of later New Testament texts is any explicit reference to the gospel by name as he names other works in existence in his day.

**Answer for yourself:** Now, if he gives so often the names of the Old Testament books from which he quotes, and the names of what were to him the New Testament books (Memoirs or the Gospel of Peter) which he used, why should he not give the names of the Four Gospels, if, as Christian apologists assert and would have us believe, he quotes from them?

The inference is plain. He was not quoting from our Four Gospels. He was using altogether different books. And yet, Christian theologians have asserted in the most positive manner that he distinctly recognizes all four of the evangelists! I give this as an illustration of the unfairness of orthodoxy and its statements. What we have here is wishful thinking of Christian writers in the absence of any explicit proof of the 4 gospels existence in 150 A.D.

To get around this sticky issue many Christian scholars, when advised of the above situation, retort that the "Memoirs of the Apostles" were in reality our Gospels under a different name.

**Answer for yourself:** Why would these Christians of the middle second century, once possessing the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of John, change the names to something other than names that had carried Apostolic authority?

An evidence that these "memoirs" were not our 4 gospels, is that Justin makes nearly a hundred quotations from the "Memoirs," and in but ONLY 2 or 3 instances are they exactly the same as the parallel New Testament passages. In other words, his quotes don't agree with the New



**Testament passages in the vast majority of the cases. Justin's allusions to the "sayings" of these "Memoirs" could have easily been but memory of the "sayings" of Jesus taken from "Q" and the oral traditions circulating about Jesus and his teachings.** There is almost invariably some difference, either in sense or construction, showing that **Justin's reference in these cases was different from the Gospels which would come later. Additionally, he quotes from it things which are not even in the Gospels at all.** He says that the "Memoirs" say that when Jesus went into the Jordan to be baptized a fire was kindled on the river (Dial., 88). There is no such thing in our Gospels. He says that the same devil which tempted Jesus on the Mount also tempted him as he was coming up out of the river (Dial., 108). Our Gospels say nothing to this effect.

You should find it very useful to keep these things in mind, for Justin Martyr's works are the great rallying point and battle-ground of orthodoxy. **As he is the first polemical writer Christianity had the church has made every effort to show that he was acquainted with our Four Gospels which his writings prove otherwise!** The efforts for those who study and read his works personally will show you that such endeavors by the church has been unsuccessful. Again the church and Christian scholars stretch the point; or should we say they lie?

**Answer for yourself:** When was the first mention of the Gospels according to the names we not have for them?

The first writer who mentions either of the Evangelists by name as an author is Theophilus of Antioch in 180 A.D. He speaks of John's Gospel (Ad Adtol., ii, 22), but says nothing of the writer being an apostle. He simply calls the writer an "inspired man."

**The first writer who mentions all four of our present Gospels by name was Irenaeus, who flourished in and about 200 A.D. Irenaeus is a real problem as we will see shortly!**

This is the whole of the "testimony of antiquity," to the beginning of the third century, as to the Four Gospels. **The books are not heard of till after 150 A.D. and closer to 180 A.D. with Irenaeus, that is, till Jesus had been dead nearly a hundred and fifty years. No writer before 180 A.D. makes the slightest mention of them. Then comes the passages from Papias, which, as you now have seen, are rather the reflections of rumors rather than evidence for our Gospels. Justin Martyr does not mention the names of either of them.** In quoting from other books, he mentions their names; and the inference is plain that he did not know of our Gospels in 150 A.D. **Theophilus of Antioch, a 150 years after Jesus was dead, makes a slight mention of the Gospel of John. But not till the year 180-200 A.D., nearly one hundred and seventy years after Jesus has died, do we hear of all Four Gospels.**

## **THE EMERGENCE OF THE GOSPELS BEARING THE APOSTLE'S NAMES**

**One needs to understand that the earliest Church Fathers knew of no Gospels bearing the Apostle's names.** It would be almost 150 years following the death of Jesus when the Latter Church Fathers would make reference to them. **At the time of Irenaeus around 180-200 A.D. the Gospels are constantly quoted by the Christian Fathers, and when orthodoxy speaks of the "unanimous testimony of antiquity as to the authenticity of the Gospels," it usually states how many times the books were quoted by Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and other later Fathers.**

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not strike you strange that in looking closely to the early Church Fathers up to 180 A.D. like Clement of Rome, Ignatius, the Didache, Papias, the Epistle of Barnabas, Polycarp, The Shepherd Of Hermas, and Justin Martyr in 150 C.E. that we find less than 3 references to anything that could remotely resemble an explicit quote of a passage later found in the 4 Gospels (and 2 of these were short passages taken

from oral traditions) yet after 180 A.D. we find continuous quotes from the 4 Gospels by almost every Christian writer after that time period? What picture does that paint for you? THINK!

The Gospels were indeed quoted by these later Church Fathers, for they all lived this side of the year **180-200 A.D., when the books had commenced to circulate under their present names.** But those later Fathers knew no more of the authorship of the books than we do, and in fact not as much, for they had not the critical ability that this age has. And they do not, when they quote the books, vouch for their authenticity. The Fathers simply give the names by which the books were known; and the earlier Fathers would have given the same names if the books had been known by those names earlier. As Dr. Westcott says:

"The main testimony of the Apostolic Fathers is therefore to the substance and not to the authenticity of the Gospels" (Canon, p. 52). Again this is explained by possession of an oral tradition in absence of the written 4 gospels.

I sure you can not have but observed how few Christian writings of the first two centuries we have. Dr. Westcott calls it the "dark age of Christian literature" because so scant are its remains; and he practically concluded that the Four Gospels were not in existence up to the year 150 A.D. by saying:

*"A few letters of consolation and warning, two or three apologies addressed to heathen, a controversy with a Jew, a vision, and a scanty gleanings of fragments of lost works, comprise all Christian literature up to the middle of the second century" (Canon, p. 11).*

## HOW DOES CHRISTIANITY DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM OF SILENCE?

I have already made mention of the fact that the Christian writers previous to the years 150 A.D. quote from tradition or from Gospels other than our four, and that the most violent efforts are now made to have it appear that the quotations are from our present Gospels. For example, Ignatius, in his epistle to Polycarp, without intimating that he is quoting it from any book or that it is other than his own sentiment, says: *"Be in all things wise as a serpent, but harmless as a dove,"* and modern apologists assert that this is from Matthew, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Polycarp says: *"Be merciful, and ye shall obtain mercy,"* and the claim is that this is the famous beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." There are a number of such passages as these, but they invariably differ more or less either in meaning or language from the New Testament parallels: and in no instance does the writer say that he obtained them from our Gospels! Even if passages were identical with those in the New Testament, they would not prove the existence of our Four Gospels, for there were many Gospels in circulation in the early ages of Christianity, which contained passages identical with those now in our four, and the quotations might have been made either from one of those or from tradition.

You will observe that when the different writers quote the words of Jesus or another person, they generally agree (circulating sayings from oral tradition); but that in the narration of the story they differ.

**Answer for yourself:** Does this not speak of memory of "sayings" or "Q" to you?

This shows that there may have been and probably was a manuscript in existence in those early days, containing the sayings of Jesus and others "Q", and that this was made use of by later writers in composing their narratives. But the fact that the Apostolic Fathers use phrases or quotes sayings, with the prefatory explanation, "It is written," or "The Lord Jesus says," which agree more or less with the passages in our Gospels, does not prove the existence then of the Gospels. Dr Westcott admits this:



were the gospels written early: the testimony and silence of justin martyr

*"No evangelical reference in the Apostolic Fathers can be referred certainly to a written period. It appears most probable, from the form of the quotations, that they were derived from oral tradition (Canon, 62).*



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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY?...THE TESTIMONY OF IRENAEUS OF LYONS

Irenaeus (c. 130 - 202) was bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, which is now Lyons, France. He is recognized as a saint by both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, and his writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology. The Catholic Church considers him a Father of the Church. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who himself was a disciple of John the Evangelist. Irenaeus is thought to have been a Greek from Polycarp's hometown of Smyrna in Asia Minor, now Izmir, Turkey. He was brought up in a Christian family, rather than converting as an adult, and this may help explain his strong sense of orthodoxy. Irenaeus was one of the first Christian writers to use the principle of apostolic succession to refute his opponents. Irenaeus is remembered as the second bishop of Lyons, although there is no hard evidence that he ever officially took over the post. The first bishop, Pothinus, was martyred c.177 during persecutions under Marcus Aurelius. Irenaeus was visiting Rome at the time. In 177 CE, shortly before his death, he was appointed bishop of Lugdunum, Gaul (Lyons, France) where he soon published his five volume Refutation & Overthrow of the So-Called Gnosis (commonly referred to simply as Against Heresies). **His defense of four canonical gospels became the standard orthodox view of their authorship, sequence & circumstances of composition:**

*Matthew also published a gospel in writing among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter & Paul were preaching the gospel and founding the church in Rome. But after their death, Mark, the disciple & interpreter of Peter, also transmitted to us in writing what Peter used to preach. And Luke, Paul's associate, also set down in a book the gospel that Paul used to preach. Later, John, the Lord's disciple --- the one who lay on his lap --- also set out the gospel while living at Ephesus in Asia Minor. (Against Heresies 3.1.1)*

Irenaeus cited from most of New Testament canon, except that he also cited 1 Clement and The Shepherd of Hermas. His writings do not refer to Philemon, 2 Peter, 3 John and Jude. **Irenaeus was the first Christian writer to list all four of the now canonical Gospels as divinely inspired. Scholars tell us today that this was in reaction to Marcion's edited version of Gospel of Luke, which he was touting as the one and only true gospel.**

**Irenaeus recognized only 4 gospels.** Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, around 180 AD, gave us the reason why he recognized only 4 gospels. This is a very odd reason to say the least. For Irenaeus we need recognize only 4 gospels out of the numerous gospels that existed in his day because there were 4 corners of the earth, 4 winds, 4 creatures in the Book of Revelation, so there must also be 4 gospels! Incidentally these 4 creatures became the symbols of our gospels. The man for Matthew, the lion for Mark, the ox for Luke and the eagle for John.

Irenaeus writes in Adversus Haereses:

*The Gospels could not possibly be either more or less in number than they are. Since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is spread over all the earth, and the pillar and foundation of the Church is the gospel, and the Spirit of life, it fittingly has*



*four pillars, everywhere breathing out incorruption and revivifying men. From this it is clear that the Word, the artificer of all things, being manifested to men gave us the gospel, fourfold in form but held together by one Spirit. As David said, when asking for his coming, 'O sit upon the cherubim, show yourself'. For the cherubim have four faces, and their faces are images of the activity of the Son of God. For the first living creature, it says, was like a lion, signifying his active and princely and royal character; the second was like an ox, showing his sacrificial and priestly order; the third had the face of a man, indicating very clearly his coming in human guise; and the fourth was like a flying eagle, making plain the giving of the Spirit who broods over the Church. Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. (3.11.8)*

## **IRENAEUS IS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN FATHER TO MENTION THE 4 GOSPELS BY APOSTOLIC NAMES...180 C.E.!!!**

One hundred and fifty years after the time for Jesus' death we find the first mention of a gospel in an Apostle's name. That to me is simply amazing. Up to now we have analyzed every important early Christian Father and we saw without a doubt that all references to "sayings" or "passages" construed as coming from a possible existing gospel in their day was nothing more than "remembering" of an oral tradition. Each account showed that any and all references to anything even remotely similar to passages in our New Testaments today comes from memory of an circulating oral tradition and nothing more!

According to Christian scholars, Irenaeus, in Adversus Haereses, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels and from Acts 54 times. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly 4 Gospels.

Irenaeus, around the year 180 gave the first historically documented list of the four gospels and their authors.

- Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Mark

*Matthew published his gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his breast [John 13:25;21:20], himself produced his gospel, when he was living in Ephesus in Asia*

The above passage by Irenaeus was also the first to give a chronological sequence of the writing of the four gospels: Matthew wrote first, followed by Mark, Luke and, finally, John. Like Papias, Irenaeus placed Matthew as the earliest gospel. This tradition of Matthew's primacy was repeated throughout Christian history (McDowell, More Than a Carpenter: p. 64).

- Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Matthew

Irenaeus writes in Adversus Haereses:

*Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... Matthew proclaims his human birth, saying, 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham,' and, 'The birth of Jesus Christ was in this manner'. for this Gospel is manlike, and so through the whole Gospel [Christ] appears as a man of a humble mind, and gentle. (3.11.8)*

Proof that Irenaeus is dependant upon oral tradition and the late date for the writing of these 4

**gospels is the fact that his reference to the Gospel of Matthew is not even the gospel of Matthew we have today!**

According to the Christian scholar, Irenaeus, in Adversus Haereses, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly 4 Gospels.

- Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Mark

Irenaeus writes in Adversus Haereses:

*Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... But Mark takes his beginning from the prophetic Spirit who comes on men from on high saying, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,' showing a winged image of the gospel. Therefore he made his message compendious and summary, for such is the prophetic character. (3.11.8)*

- Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Luke

Irenaeus writes in Adversus Haereses:

*Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... That according to Luke, as having a priestly character, began with the priest Zacharias offering incense to God. For the fatted calf was already being prepared which was to be sacrificed for the finding of the younger son. (3.11.8) [c.f. Luke 15:23]*

Irenaeus and the Gospel according to John

Irenaeus writes in Adversus Haereses:

*Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. For that according to John expounds his princely and mighty and glorious birth from the Father, saying, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,' and, 'All things were made by him, and without him nothing was nothing made'. Therefore this Gospel is deserving of all confidence, for such indeed is his person. (3.11.8)*

## IRENÆUS AND THE OVERTHROW OF Gnostic CHRISTIANITY

Irenaeus wrote a number of books, but the most important that survives, as stated above, is the five-volume On the Detection and Overthrow of the So-Called Gnosis, normally referred to as Against Heresies. Only fragments in its original language, Greek, are extant, but a complete copy exists in a wooden Latin translation, made shortly after its publication in Greek, and Books IV and V are present in a literal Armenian translation. The purpose of Against Heresies is to refute the teachings of various gnostic groups. Until the discovery of the Library of Nag Hammadi in 1945, Against Heresies was the best description we had of gnosticism. **With the discovery of this Library of Nag Hammadi however scholars teach us that Irenaeus maliciously misrepresented Gnostic Christianity.**

The central point of Irenaeus' theology is the unity of God, in opposition to the Gnostics' division of God into a number of divine "Aeons", and their distinction between the "High God" and the wicked "Demiurge" who created the world. Irenaeus uses the Logos theology he inherits from Justin Martyr, but prefers to speak of the Son and the Spirit as the "hands of God". **Christ, for him, is the invisible Father made visible.**

Few Christians know that Irenaeus believed that Christ, in addition to reversing the wrongs done by Adam, "summed up" human life. This means that Christ goes through every stage of human life, from infancy to old



age, and simply by living it, sanctifies it with his divinity. **Irenaeus is therefore forced to argue that Christ did not die until he was quite old! Irenaeus thus thinks that our salvation comes about, essentially, through the incarnation of God as man.** He characterizes the penalty for sin as death and corruption. God, however, is immortal and incorruptible, and simply by becoming united to human nature in Christ he conveys those qualities to us: they spread, as it were, like a benign infection. **Irenaeus therefore understands the atonement of Christ as happening through his incarnation rather than his crucifixion, although the latter is an integral part of the former.** Irenaeus is remembered as a martyr, although there is no evidence for how he died, presumably shortly after the turn of the third century. He was buried under the church of Saint John's in Lyons, which was later renamed St. Irenaeus. His tomb and his remains were destroyed in 1562 by the Calvinist Huguenots. The remains of Leonardo da Vinci and Kepler, among others, also were lost in the religious wars of those times.

But our purpose here is to focus upon **Irenaeus and the emergence of a Second New Testament that refutes the existing First New Testament of Gnostic Christianity which teaches the "allegorical Christ" and not a "fleshly Christ".** When we look in-depth to Irenaeus he fares not much better than Papias, unfortunately. **Irenaeus lived even later than Papias did and is, thus, not a reliable source for anything other than the tradition that he learned.** He did not know the author of any book of the Bible (that we are aware of). Smith says of Irenaeus (<http://religion.rutgers.edu/nt/primer/irenaeus.html>): Nor does his claim that Mark transcribed Peter's preaching support the view of Augustine, Griesbach & other western Christians that Mark condensed Matthew. **Irenaeus must also be stricken from the record as unreliable as he relies on the testimony of those who came before him. He, thus, presents nothing more than hearsay.**

**Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 185) vigorously defended the notion that there were exactly four Gospels, no more and no less, as a touchstone of orthodoxy.** He pointed out that it was illogical to reject Acts of the Apostles but accept the Gospel of Luke, as both were from the same author. This was crucial to refuting Marcion's anti-Judaism, as Acts gives honor to James, Peter and Paul alike. At the time, Jewish Christians tended to honor James (a prominent Christian in Jerusalem described in the New Testament as an "apostle" and "pillar", and by Eusebius and other church historians as the first Bishop of Jerusalem) but not Paul, while Gentiles tended to honor Paul more than James.

*"And no other Pope, Bishop or Father (until Irenaeus), for nearly a century after "Pope Clement," ever mentions or quotes a Gospel, or names Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. So for a century and a half-until the books bobbed up in the hands of Bishop St. Irenaeus and were tagged as "Gospels according to" this or that Apostle, there exists not a word of them in all the tiresome tomes of the Fathers. It is humanly and divinely impossible that the "Apostolic authorship" and hence "canonicity" or divine inspiration of these Sacred Four should have remained, for a century and a half, unknown and unsuspected by every Church, Father, Pope and Bishop of Christendom-if existent. Even had they been somewhat earlier in existence, never an inspired hint or human suspicion was there, that they were "Divine" or "Apostolic," or any different from the scores of "apocryphal or pseudo-Biblical writings with which the East especially had been flooded"; that they were indeed "Holy Scripture." Hear this notable admission: "It was not until about the middle of the second century that under the rubric of Scripture the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old"! (Catholic Encyclopedia. iii, 275), that is, became regarded as apostolic, sacred, inspired and canonical, or "Scriptures" (Joseph Wheless, Forgery In Christianity, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 182-183).*

*"Though Irenaeus, in the second century, is the first who mentions the evangelists, and Origen, in the third century, is the first who gives us a catalogue of the books contained in the New Testament, Mosheim's admission still stands before us. We have no grounds of assurance that the mere mention of the names of the evangelists by Irenaeus, or the arbitrary drawing up of a particular catalogue by Origen, were of any authority. It is still unknown by whom, or where, or when, the canon of the New*



*Testament was settled. But in this absence of positive evidence we have abundance of negative proof. We know when it was not settled. We know it was not settled in the time of Emperor Justinian, nor in the time of Cassiodorus; that is, not at any time before the middle of the sixth century, by any authority that was decisive and universally acknowledged; but Christian people were at liberty to judge for themselves concerning the genuineness of writings proposed to them as apostolical"* (T.W. Doane, **Bible Myth And Their Parallels In Other Religions**, The Truth Seeker Co., New York, 1882, p. 464.).

*"To argue and prove that the Four (Gospels) were regarded as "Apostolic" and hence "canonical" after the middle of the second century, argues and proves that until that late date they were not so regarded,- which we have seen is impossible if they had been written by Apostles a hundred years and more previously and authorized by them "for the purpose of being read in the Churches," as the very ground and pillar of their foundation and faith....Follow the proofs and argument of the Church to its own undoing: 'From the testimony of St. Irenaeus (A.D. 185) alone there can be no reasonable doubt that the Canon of the Gospel was inalterably fixed in the Catholic Church by the last quarter of the second century to the exclusion of any pretended Evangels. [Sundry writings mentioned] presuppose the authority enjoyed by the Fourfold Gospel towards the middle of tile second century.... Even Rationalistic scholars like Harnack admit the canonicity of the quadriform Gospel between the years 140-175.'" (Catholic Encyclopedia. iii, 275.) "Even the Catholic Encyclopedia does not prove or claim that it was any earlier; so here the Church and the Rationalists are in accord on this fatal fact! Certainly Popes Peter and Clement I, not to review the silent others, would have "inalterably fixed" the Divine Canonicity of the Four a century before, if they had known about these precious productions of the Apostles;-if, in fact, they had existed, the known works of Holy Apostles and apostolic men! But until "towards the middle of the second century" there was no "canon" or notion of divinely inspired Apostolic Gospels-simply for the reason that until just about that period they were not in existence....The sudden appearance at a certain late date, of a previously unknown document, which is then attributed to an earlier age and long since dead writers, is one of the surest earmarks of forgery"* (Joseph Wheless, **Forgery In Christianity**, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 184-185).

We have shown you earlier in this website through abundant proofs how the First New Testament given to us by Marcion taught the allegorical concept handed down by the Ancients concerning "the Christ" of God which lives within every man and woman and life's quest which is to awaken ourselves to this "Christ within us" and became aware of the indwelling Christ and not only yield to His direction but at the same time allow the Christ to make mediation for us with the Divine Creator. This truth is totally erased later by the proto-literalist Catholics like Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, who begin to teach the "literalization" of "the Christ" as a historical personage. The culmination of all of this is the falsification of many "gospels" and "epistles" in the names of long-dead Apostles and Paul to gain a false authority for such later doctrinal creations like the "historical fleshy Christ". We look to Irenaeus for the supreme invention when we find that it was he that provides the ultimate refutation of the earlier Gnostic Gospels and the First New Testament by Marcion by the presentation of his Second New Testament in roughly 180 C.E. which now contained these fictitious 4 gospels which teaches now a "fleshy Christ Jesus".





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## WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN EARLY? THE CONCLUSION

We have looked at each of the early Church Fathers from the end of the first century to the end of the second century and we find no explicit reference or mention of either of the 4 Gospels until we meet up with Irenaeus in 180 A.D. **This will lead any thinking believer to conclude that these 4 Gospels were written rather late and our studies have shown the motive for their writing; namely, to present anti-Gnostic accounts of "the Christ" in hopes of refuting earlier Gnostic Christianity.**

Often various Christian writers will maintain that these 4 Gospels were written early; before the end of the first century. This is of course the normal orthodox stance but it simply cannot hold up to intense examination and scrutiny. What we saw in our studies of these early Church Fathers and their writings is that none of them until 180 A.D. made any concrete and explicit reference to any of the 4 Gospels by name. We conclude from this that any reference to any "sayings" of the Lord in their writings were not taken from either of our current 4 Gospels today but rather from circulating oral traditions or "sayings of the Christ" or from possible other written documents; possibly the Logia written in Hebrew by the true Levi and follower of "the Christ".

There are basically two different forms of communication, oral and written. The apostles used both in exercising their "power of attorney" to present Christ's Word. **The oral form of communicating God's Word is by far the earliest form used by the apostles and dates back to their first commission to "preach" (Matt. 10; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). For the first few years, apostolic preaching held a place of high importance. Since oral communication is so important, and Christ authorized His apostles to use it, we should understand the New Testament concept of it.**

In the New Testament there are many references to the apostles' oral form of communication. Luke wrote that the "things which are most surely believed" were "delivered . . . unto us [Luke and his contemporaries] which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:1-4). Many of these eyewitnesses and ministers may have told Luke about Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection.

The Book of Acts contains many examples of oral communication within the apostolic church. The first instance is Peter's Pentecost sermon, when he "lifted up his voice, and said to them. . . be this known unto you, and hearken to my words" (Acts 2:14; cf. 2:22, 40). Another is Luke's record of the early church's prayer asking God to "grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." God answered their prayer, and they spoke "the word of God with boldness" (4:29-31).

Miracles often accompanied the apostles, as was the case when they were miraculously released from prison. They were told to go to the temple and "speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:20). Later the twelve apostles addressed the other disciples about how they did not want to give up preaching "the word of God and serve tables." They wanted helpers so they could devote themselves "to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." The result was that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (6:2-7).

There are many other references to the apostles' oral communications: "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4); "they had testified and preached the word of the Lord. . . . preached the gospel" (8:25); "received the word of God" (11:1); "the word of God grew and multiplied" (12:24); "came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God" (cf. 13:44); "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you" (13:46); "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord" (15:35); "the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (16:10); "they spake unto him the word of the Lord" (16:32); "teaching the word of God among them" (18:11); "mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (19:20), et al. These Scriptures show that apostles knew that they were preaching the Word of God to the people. This important means of spreading the Word continued throughout the apostolic age.

There are also references to the oral form of communication in the Epistles. Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth, "teaching the word of God" (Acts 18:11). This was effective oral teaching because in a later letter to this church he wrote, "I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2). Paul wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica, "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thess. 2:15). Jude also wrote that when he was eager "to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul taught by the spoken word, and the faith Jude wrote of being delivered to the saints is probably a reference to the spoken word also.

I share this with you because the references taken from the early Church Fathers before Irenaeus which Christian writer wish us to believe were taken from our 4 Gospels simply were not; rather they were "remembered" as taken from memorized oral traditions and sayings of "the Christ". Other than the Pauline 7 authentic epistles most of the New Testament in our possession today was not written until quite late as a refutation to an earlier existing Christianity which was not of Rome's liking. So they will change it and forge many religious documents in the names of long-dead Apostles and Paul to give these writings the authority needed for acceptance by the Greek speaking world.

The existing works of the Apostolic Fathers are of relatively small compass, making in all a volume about the same size as the New Testament. Except for the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the *Didache*, and Papias' *Expositions*, all are in the form of epistles after the model of Paul's. They originated, not in scientific study, but in practical religious feeling, and contain not analyses of doctrine so much as simple direct assertions of faith and exhortations to a holy life. In such documents we do not expect to find discussions of canonicity, but, at most, testimony here and there as to the existence of this or that book which later came to be regarded as belonging to the holy Scriptures of the New Testament.

Despite wide differences among the Apostolic Fathers as to geographical milieu and, more importantly, ideological orientation, it is possible to draw several generalized conclusions. It is natural that attitudes toward the Old Testament and toward individual books of the New Testament (so far as they were known) would differ in accord with the background of the several authors. For early Jewish Christians the Bible consisted of the Old Testament and some Jewish apocryphal literature. Along with this written authority went traditions, chiefly oral, of sayings attributed to Jesus. On the other hand, authors who belonged to the "Hellenistic wing" of the Church refer more frequently to writings that later came to be included in the New Testament. At the same time, however, they very rarely regarded such documents as "Scripture".

In short, we find in both the Jewish and the Hellenistic groups a knowledge of the existence of a diverse circulating oral tradition of "sayings" of the Lord which will later be written and will comprise the New Testament, and more than once they express their thoughts through phrases drawn from these oral traditions and diverse early writings. These reminiscences tend to show that an implicit authority of such writings was sensed before a theory of their authority had been developed-in fact, before there was even a consciousness of their authority. This authority, moreover, did not have, to any degree, an exclusive character.



On the other hand, we see that the words of "the Christ" are taken as the supreme authority. Sometimes these quotations of the sayings of "the Christ" taken from this circulating oral tradition will be similar to what we later find in the four Gospels of 180 A.D.; at other times they differ.

What we must never forget that it is in the later writing of these later 4 Gospels that the identity and substance of "the Christ" is altered; instead of an allegory expressing Divine Truths Rome "literalizes" the "Christ within" and inserts this Roman creation into a timeline of Rome's making and presents their creation as if a literal human messiah in Palestine. Giving a "fleshly existence" to this "Christ within" by replacing the First New Testament with a Second New Testament of Rome's making the "human Christ Jesus" is given life on the pages of 4 books which were written by anti-semitic Gentiles and this literary invention is given for authority sake the names of long-dead Apostles and Paul. The end result is that the allegorical Christ within each of us is made to be centered in only one individual who is depicted to be the Jewish Messiah. The Jews know better because they know their Hebrew Scriptures and know that this Christ Jesus as depicted in the New Testament has more in common with paganism than with Jewish Messianism. Rome "literally" robs the world of the truth concerning "God's Christ" (excuse the pun)!

The evidence provided in the preceding articles from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers does scarcely more than point to the existence and, to some extent, the dissemination of certain early Christian writings and epistles which will serve as the blue-print for the formation of Rome's New Testament. By the close of the second century, however, we can see the outline of what may be described as the nucleus of the Roman New Testament which will replace the earlier Gnostic First New Testament. Today with the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in Egypt we have before us the writings and theology of the First New Testament and when both are read and compared we see startling differences between understandings of "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ" of Rome's making. One is an allegorical representation of God and "His Christ" within us, the Temple of God, and the other the literalization of this internal Divine Principle who is given a genealogy, although a conflicting one, and a life that has more in common with the Sungods than with a Jewish Messiah. Any cursory study of comparative religions will show you the Jesus story over and over again down through history in every sun worshipping Aryan nation. There truly is nothing new under the sun!

Once you see this then it is not hard to see what Rome has done to not only to the Divine Revelation of God once given the saints and the history of this planet for the last two thousand years but to you and I as well and the tragic fact slowly dawns upon you about how we have been given an idolatrous mediator instead of the understanding and awakening to the Christ within which God intended we know all along.

In other words Rome hated the Gnostic Revelation of God and His Cosmos and did everything in their power to destroy it. Had it not been for the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and its finding in Egypt some 50 years ago we would still be lulled to sleep by the Roman lie and die in our sins of idolatry and blasphemy of God due to the inherited Christian "literalized historical Jesus" that they foisted upon an ignorant world at the point of a sword.

*Rom 16:25-27 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations [Gentiles] for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. (KJV)*

*Col 1:26-27 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

were the gospels written early: conclusion







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## WERE FRAGMENTS OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK FOUND AT QUMRAN?

Between 1947-1956 an enormous number of Jewish writings were found in eleven caves near Qumran, close to the Dead Sea. For students of the Bible and of early Judaism, this discovery has turned out to be the archaeological find of the century. Shortly before the arrival of the Romans in AD 68, the writings were hidden in eleven nearby caves by the members of the "Essene" sectarian community whose ruined buildings have been excavated at Qumran. The Qumran community may well have originated as a rift within the Essene movement in the middle of the second century BC. **Analysis of the handwriting styles of the manuscripts suggests that most of them were written in the two centuries BC, results which were confirmed in 1991 by carbon 14 analysis of tiny samples of manuscripts undertaken with new techniques.** If you remember from an earlier article we discussed how scholars look at the script and style of the writings and the shapes of letters in order to determine the dates of various written records as they trace the evolution of various styles of writing.

About 800 manuscripts have been recovered; 225 are copies of Biblical books, the remainder are religious writings. The finds in Cave 4 are mind-boggling: about 15,000 fragments from about 550 different manuscripts. Some of the scrolls are remarkably complete, but there are thousands of tiny fragments. Some of this work can be likened to assembling a giant jigsaw puzzle with many pieces missing - and to complicate matters it is sometimes not clear how many jigsaw puzzles are on the table!

**The Dead Sea Scrolls do not refer or allude to Jesus, John the Baptist, James, Mary Magdalene, or any early Christians. Nearly all of them were written during the two centuries before Jesus was born.** With the exception of only a very few maverick scholars (notably Barbara Thiering and Robert Eisenman), all Qumran specialists in different parts of the world accept these conclusions, whatever their personal religious convictions. Attempts (mainly by Christians) to overturn this consensus all play fast and loose with the evidence of both the Scrolls and the Gospels. The theories of Barbara Thiering and Robert Eisenman are being steadily falsified by rigorous new carbon 14 analysis. **None of the writings tested so far has been dated to the first century AD, necessary if they are to contain references to Jesus or his followers.**

There circulates today a claim that a fragment of Mark's Gospel known as **7Q5** has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is a curious irony in the fact that so far this fragment has not featured in any of the mass market books which claim that some of the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to Jesus or to earliest Christianity. Although the theory has been discussed by scholars for some time now, wider interest in 7Q5 has so far been confined largely to conservative Christian circles (both Roman Catholic and Protestant) where it has been seen as offering "proof" for the early date and reliability of Mark's Gospel.

Answer for yourself: Do we actually find a small fragment of the Gospel of Mark at Qumran and is so then does this constitute proof of an early date for the writing of the Gospels? Could these Gospels then have been "eyewitness" testimonies for a historical Jesus of Nazareth?

## CAVE 7 AT QUMRAN...WHAT A FIND!

In 1955 18 papyrus fragments in Greek (7Q1-18) were discovered in Cave 7 at Qumran.. In addition, a set of imprints on the ground (7Q19) was discovered, probably from several texts. The Greek scroll fragments from Qumran present a curious phenomenon: whereas the one Greek Old Testament papyrus from Cave 4 (supplemented by four Greek parchment scraps and one Exodus paraphrase on papyrus from the same cave) does not appear to belong to a separate collection, but to a general, motley, "library" preserved in that cave, the neighboring cave 7 includes a collection in its own right -- nothing but nineteen Greek fragments, eighteen of them on papyrus, and another one preserved as an imprint in the hardened soil of the cave. Apart from some pottery remains, nothing else was found in the cave. Whereas very nearly all the manuscripts in the other 10 caves were written in Hebrew or Aramaic, the fragments found in Cave 7 are all in Greek.

**Answer for yourself:** Why were scrolls in Greek put in a cave on their own? If the Essenes at Qumran were Hebrews then why were they writing in Greek or did they?

The Cave 7 fragments were published in 1962. Only two fragments were identified: 7Q1 as Exodus 28:4-7, and 7Q2 as Baruch 6:43-4 (Epistle of Jeremiah), both of which are close to the text of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. On the advice of the respected Oxford palaeographer C. H. Roberts, 7Q1-3 were dated at about 100 BC, and 7Q4-18 between 50 BC and AD 50. Some pottery remains were dated to the two centuries BC and prior to AD 68.

There matters rested until 1972. There were plenty of other more promising Qumran writings to occupy the attention of scholars. In 1972 the Spanish scholar José O'Callaghan claimed that 7Q5 contained parts of Mark 6:52-3.

*Mark 6:52-53 52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. 53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. (KJV)*

He later identified 7Q4 as I Timothy 3:16 - 4:1,3. With much less confidence, he suggested that seven further Cave 7 fragments were parts of New Testament writings: three more of Mark, one each of Acts, Romans, James and II Peter. M. Baillet, the editor of the original publication of the Cave 7 scrolls, rejected O'Callaghan's identifications, as did several other respected scholars.

As mentioned in an earlier article O'Callaghan's identification of 7Q5 is now being vigorously and tirelessly championed by Carsten Thiede. All participants in the debate agree that unless 7Q5 is accepted as part of Mark 6:52-3, the other proposed links with New Testament writings are no more than interesting speculations.

**Answer for yourself:** Why is there a mixture of opinion if this "fragment of Greek text" is possibly from the Gospel of Mark? First of all know that if it can be proven then we have possible "eyewitness" testimony to the existence of a historical Jesus Christ. It seems that the current intense debate is over one damaged letter in one tiny fragment among the thousands found in the Qumran caves.

Many scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written between AD 65 and 75. If Mark's Gospel was written by, say, AD 60, we might have a little more confidence in its historical reliability, but it would not shorten appreciably the gap between the crucifixion of Jesus and the composition of Mark, our earliest Gospel.

On the basis of analysis of the style of handwriting carried out long before O'Callaghan first advanced his theory, C. H. Roberts suggested that 7Q5 was written between 50 BC and AD 50.

**Answer for yourself:** So if 7Q5 is from Mark, was this Gospel written no later than AD 50? Of course not.



**Roberts, like other palaeographers, frequently emphasized that styles of handwriting cannot be dated with any precision.**

**According to a tradition which goes back to the end of the second century, Mark was written in Rome.** This is certainly possible, but an equally good case can be made out in favour of Antioch in Syria, or even Galilee. Cave 7 was not far from main trade routes, so a copy could have been brought south from Antioch or Galilee within a few days. And a copy could have reached Qumran from Rome, via Jerusalem, in weeks rather than months.

O'Callaghan did not stop to consider such questions. Carsten Thiede, however, has not shirked the challenge. Carsten Thiede notes that a damaged jar bearing **the Hebrew inscription "rwm" (vocalized Roma or Ruma) twice on its neck has been found in Cave 7.** He then builds on a cautious suggestion made by J. A. Fitzmyer that the inscription might be an **attempt at writing Rome in Hebrew letters.**

He goes on to say:

***"Thus it would indicate the original ownership of the scrolls: they belonged to and came from the Christian community in Rome which supplied the "home communities" in Palestine with material collected and copied in Rome or at any rate of Roman origin (such as the Gospel according to Mark")***

Thiede then sketches out three possible scenarios to explain how Christian scrolls in Greek may have found their way from Rome to Qumran. Other scholars maintain that the inscription on the jar is more likely to be a proper name than a reference to the origin of the scrolls in Rome.

**If 7Q5 is part of Mark, it would undoubtedly be the earliest surviving fragment of any part of the New Testament.**

As we saw in the preceding articles, **some 42 papyrus fragments of the Gospels have now come to light, and every single one is from a codex and none from a roll or scroll. 7Q5, like the other Qumran writings, is written on only one side, so it is from a roll.** An early fragment of Mark from a roll would be an unexpected surprise, but it is not impossible. So far all the earliest papyri of the Gospels have come from Egypt, but discovery in a Qumran cave cannot be ruled out.

**Answer for yourself:** Who would have placed a copy of Mark's Gospel in a cave near Qumran? Most scholars assume that the Greek fragments discovered in Cave 7 were placed there by the Qumran community before the Romans advanced through the area in AD 68.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it conceivable that a member of the Qumran community put a copy of Mark, along with some other texts in Greek, in a cave in isolation from texts in Hebrew and Aramaic?

**Most modern scholars today believe that this is most unlikely:**

- First, the Qumran community had very little interest either in writings in Greek or in religious writings with which they were totally out of sympathy. Apart from the fragments in Cave 7, only a few more fragments in Greek have been found - among the 15,000 in Cave 4. **The Greek scrolls were almost certainly brought to Qumran from elsewhere.**
- **And secondly, Mark's Gospel would not have been of any interest at all to members of the Qumran community. Mark and Qumran were at opposite ends of the first-century religious spectrum. Mark is more radical on the question of observance of the Jewish law than Matthew or Luke; only Mark states that Jesus declared all foods clean (7:20). On the other hand, the Qumran community sought to observe the Jewish law more meticulously than many other Jews.**

**There is a huge gap between the theology and the religious worlds of Mark and the Qumran community. So if 7Q5 is part of Mark, perhaps someone other than a member of the Qumran community placed the Greek scrolls in Cave 7.** This is not impossible: the Copper Scroll from Cave 3 probably had nothing to do with the rest of the Qumran writings either. J. A. Fitzmyer has noted that "it resembles the rest of the Qumran writings neither in palaeography nor in language (being an early form of Mishnaic Hebrew).

**Answer for yourself:** Was this also the case with the scrolls in Greek in Cave 7?

In AD 68 the sounds and smells of war were not far away. In that setting it is just possible that someone without any link with the Qumran community hid some Greek scrolls in Cave 7 in desperation. After all, Cave 7 was not far from north-south, and east-west lines of communication.

**Answer for yourself:** If someone other than a member of the Qumran community placed scrolls in Cave 7, when might this have happened?

It is natural to assume that the Greek Scrolls (along with all the other scrolls) were hidden shortly before the Romans arrived in AD 68. On the other hand, it is important to note that while there is no archaeological evidence which indicates that Cave 7 was used after AD 68, there is no evidence which rules out that possibility. **So if 7Q5 is part of Mark, it is just possible that the scroll was placed in the cave after AD 68.** Part of Cave 7 has now collapsed and it is most unlikely that it ever will give up any more of its secrets. Acceptance of the theory that 7Q5 is part of Mark 6 would clearly involve revision of a number of generally held views concerning earliest Christianity.

## **SO IS 7Q5 A PART OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK: 6:52-53?**

**Answer for yourself:** Do the five lines of 7Q5 contain parts of Mark 6:52-3?

**7Q5 contains only ten Greek letters on four lines which can be read with certainty.**

What we find when we examine 7Q5 is that this text did not contain the Greek phrase *epi tin gin* (to land), otherwise line 4 would be nine letters too long. What we do find is that the phrase "to land" is found in all Greek manuscripts of Mark and all the early translations into other languages. But here the phrase is omitted in 7Q5. This is an embarrassment for the theory that 7Q5 is taken from the Gospel of Mark which would indicate an early date for the writing of the Gospels as Mark is used by the writer of the Gospel of Matthew as well.

The fragment under question has many letters "questionable". Two letters are clear in line two, *tau* and *omega*. For some time now the next letter has been central to the debate. **If 7Q5 is fragment of Mark, this damaged letter must be a nu, otherwise the theory collapses.** Thiede claims that the difference between what he takes to be a partial *nu* in line 2 and the clear *nu* in line 4 is not significant, for the scribe of 7Q5 did vary his letters slightly. He cites as an example the difference between the *eta* in line four, and the *eta* in line 5.

But a simple test shows that this claim is fallacious. By using tracing paper on an enlarged clear photograph of 7Q5 one can compare the two *etas*: the difference is insignificant. **But if one then traces the clear nu in line 4 and tries to place it over the disputed damaged letter in line 2, it is immediately obvious that a nu simply will not fit there.**

Very properly, Thiede insists that careful examination of the original is always preferable to photographs, even if they are infrared, or enlargements. He concludes that the *nu* (the Greek letter is shaped like the English letter N) in line 2 is "highly possible". **Other experienced scholars have looked at the original recently and have concluded that a nu is impossible.** This this fragment found at Qumran is not



from the Gospel of Mark.

One last argument used to support the O'Callaghan/Thiede theory needs to be examined. Computer searches have been mentioned several times in the debate concerning whether this fragment comes from the Gospel of Mark. In particular, appeal has been made to a search at Tyndale House, Cambridge, using the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) CD-ROM, a massive database of almost all the Greek writings of antiquity. This search failed to yield any text other than Mark 6:52-3 for the letters 7Q5 identified by O'Callaghan. **On the surface this seems to provide impressive support for the O'Callaghan theory until one learns that the Cambridge search did not take account of all the possible ways of reading the damaged letters in 7Q5.**

There is an even more serious limitation with computer searches. Although computers can search rapidly databases which incorporate selected editions of texts, not even the TLG CD ROM is complete. It does not include all possible readings damaged letters, let alone textual variations in manuscript. Above all, neither the TLG CD-ROM nor any other database can possibly include lost writings or missing sections of text. Many Jewish writings in Greek have survived either only in part or in translations into other languages, or not at all. **7Q5 almost certainly a fragment of one such writing.**

In closing let us not forget what we have learned from past studies. **It was not uncommon for "oral traditions" concerning the teachings of "the Christ" to be later written down and varied among communities. This mind you is long before any compilation of Gospels was made.** These oral traditions will comprise a compendia of teachings which will later become incorporated into the New Testament. So even if this one "scrap fragment" contains an oral tradition of a teaching of "the Christ" that does not mean anything besides that it has become a written record of such a teaching and we cannot infer from this "one fragment" that a whole Gospel or Gospels existed at that time. This will become very apparent to you when you examine the role of oral tradition in the shaping of the New Testament which is also on this website.



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## IRENÆUS' REFERENCE TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IN 200 A.D: WAS IT REALLY TO THE GOSPEL OF THE HEBREWS?

**Guess what? The Gospel of Matthew was not the Gospel of Matthew we have today!**

While there is no trace of our Four Gospels previous to the year 150 A.D., and while we do not know who it was after that time that wrote or compiled them, or exactly when they did it, the testimony of the early Fathers as to one of them may throw some light on the subject. Long before our Gospel of Matthew was known, Papias spoke of the "Gospel According to the Hebrews," and said that it contained a history of a woman accused of many sins before the Lord (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., iii. 39). Coming down later in time we find that both Eusebius and Irenaeus agree in saying that the Ebionites used only one Gospel; but Eusebius said it was called the "Gospel According To The Hebrews" (Eccl. Hist., iii. 27), while Irenaeus said it was the "Gospel According to Matthew" (Adv. Her., i 26). **Moreover, both Epiphanius (403 A.D.) and Jerome (420 A.D.) say that the "Gospel according to the Hebrews" and the "Gospel according to Matthew" were the same book under different names.** As the "Gospel according to the Hebrews" was in existence and in use first, the deduction is quote plain that some one subsequently forged Matthew's name to it. So you should understand that when you read that the Ebionites used only one Gospel and one Gospel only, and read that it was called "The Gospel of Matthew" then it in reality does not mean the Gospel of Matthew that we are familiar today, but the "Gospel of the Hebrews".





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# THE SECOND NEW TESTAMENT AND SCHOLARY ATTESTATION AS TO AUTHORSHIP

The table below summarizes the current state of scholarly opinion about the status of the New Testament authorship. **Please spend some time on this chart and notice just how many of these "books" have not only dubious authorship but are outright forgeries which falsly carry Apostolic authority when in reality there is none!**

**Answer for yourself:** Just who is behind the writing of these "books" which are presented with Apostolic authority when they in reality have none? What "theology" are we being given by these later "forgeries" and "erroneous books" in the names of the Apostles when an in-depth study of archeology, biblical history, and modern scholarship available to us today show that the earliest Christians were more "gnostic" in their understanding of "the Christ" than we have been told by these later written forgeries in the Apostle's names?

New Testament Books	Traditional Authorship Attribution	Conclusion Based on Critical Research	Main Reasons Why Result of Critical Research Does no Agree with Tradition
1. Matthew	Matthew	False	The obvious dependence of this gospel on the gospel of Mark (who is a non eye-witness)means that it could not have been written by Matthew, who would have been an eyewitness to most of the events.
2. Mark	Mark	False	The John Mark referred to in Acts 12:12 could not have made the numerous geographical mistakes committed by this gospel writer. Look at Mark 7:3 & 5:1-13 for starters.
3. Luke	Luke	False	The internal evidence points towards a late date of composition, circa 100 CE. Certain historical errors in Luke-Acts made it unlikely that Luke was the author.
4. John	John the Son of Zebedee	False	Presence of Greek philosophy, mysticism and dogma that could not reasonable be expected of an unschooled Galilean peasant (Acts 4:13).
5. Acts of the Apostles	Luke	False	Same reason as Luke.
6. Romans 7. I Corinthians 8. II Corinthians 9. Galatians	Paul	True	
10. Ephesians	Paul	False	Style is sluggish, unlike Paul's volatile one.
11. Philippians	Paul	True	-
12. Colossians	Paul	Doubtful	Difference in style and vocabulary
13. I Thessalonians	Paul	True	-

14. II Thessalonians	Paul	Doubtful	Difference in style and vocabulary
15. I Timothy	Paul	False	The existence of a highly organized church (I Tim 3:15), with definite creeds (I Tim 1:13, 4:6), and written gospels (I Timothy 3:16) seem presupposed in these three epistles.
16. II Timothy			
17. Titus			
18. Philemon	Paul	True	-
19. Hebrew	Paul	False	No internal evidence suggest Pauline authorship.
20. James	James the brother of Jesus	False	The cultured language of the epistle could not have been derived from a Palestinian with a humble background. It is unlikely that a Jew, whose mother tongue was Aramaic, could write the polished literary Greek of the epistle.
21. I Peter	Peter	False	Author exhibits an extensive knowledge of Greek and Greek philosophical ideas. Highly improbable for an uneducated Galilean peasant. (Acts 4:13)
22. II Peter			
23. I John	John the son of Zebedee	False	Author introduces himself in II John and III John as John the Elder, a different person from John the son of Zebedee.
24. II John			
25. III John			
26. Jude	Jude the brother of Jesus	False	Based on literary style a mid-second century document.
27. Revelation	John the son of Zebedee	False	No internal claim that the author is John son of Zebedee. John was a very common Hebrew name.

**Note the consensus above. According to the experts eighteen out of the twenty seven books had false attribution of authorship. Two more are doubtful. This leaves us with seven books, all of which are epistles of Paul, in which we know the author with some certainty.**

**Answer for yourself:** What should we recognize looking at this chart and from study from this current website?

**Namely that these 7 early authentic epistles of Paul reveal to us the earliest "Christian" understanding of "the Christ".** We have shown repeatedly from many infallible proofs at <http://firstnewtestament.net/firms.com> that the **earliest form of "Christianity" was a Gnostic Christianity which taught an allegorical "Christ within" and not a "historical fleshly Christ" as we have taught by these above forgeries in Rome's "literalization of the Christ" and their refutation of Gnostic Christianity.** This Gnostic understanding of "the Christ" will be later almost obliterated by the gross forgery of the "proto-literalist Catholic theology" by men from Ignatious up to Ireneaeus and beyond. These anti-Gnostic tendencies through forgery of later religious documents by these supposed esteemed "Church Fathers" not only refute the earlier existing New Testament of Marcion which reveals the earliest understanding of "the Christ" but deceive millions into believing in a "historical" and "fleshly Christ" which cannot be proven from ANY exisiting evidence outside of this ONE forged book of Rome which is shown above by scholarly analysis to be a collection of dubious books if not an outright forgery of many of them.

This has important implications which will be explored when we look at the evidence for a historical Christ and Jesus in forthcoming articles. It is time we seriously examine this book we have inherited and try as best we can to recover the "faith once given to the saints" and make sure that what we have been taught today by Rome is the same "faith" of the Apostles and earliest expression of Christiainity before Rome begins their corruption of it. It is to these issues we not turn.




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# THE LOST GOSPELS OF THE FIRST CENTURY #1

**Answer for yourself:** What was the earliest beliefs of the followers of "the Christ" in the first century and did they leave us any written documents? Are the teachings of these earliest followers of "the Christ" different from what we find in our current New Testaments today? Do we have these earliest gospels and other early written documents from these earliest followers of "the Christ" in the first century in our current New Testaments and if not; why not?

When Christianity had become partially established in the early first century by the followers of "the Christ" and the preaching of his apostles and disciples, there arose among the Christians of the various churches a necessity, and hence a demand, for some written testimonies or records of the life and doctrines of their great master. But this need was not so apparent or pressing in the first century as we might suppose. We must never forget that these early Jewish believers who not only expected an anointed human messiah to come from God and deliver Israel from the grips of Gentile domination also understood the workings of "the Christ" within their souls. The Torah is the ultimate expression of the teachings of God and His Christ. Having the Hebrew Scriptures and the Torah we find no need for any new literature on the part of the Jewish nation. However that was not the case for the Gentiles since according to Paul:

*Eph 2:12 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (KJV)*

We are all familiar that Paul is called to the Gentiles and it is to them that he takes the message of "the Christ":

*Rom 11:13 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: (KJV)*

Again we are all aware of the Pauline Epistles as being the earliest writings concerning "the Christ" which we can find in the first century.

**Answer for yourself:** Although as we have found from our previous study that the 4 gospels in our possession today were not written early as church tradition maintains we need to ask if there were other gospels written in the first century and what happened to them since it is evident that we don't have them in our New Testaments today. Can we find today if there existed early gospels in the first century that were cherished by the followers of "the Christ" in the first century and if so what were they and what did they teach? Lucky for us today is that the answer to that question is a resounding "yes"; we know of them and can find much about them in this information age in which we live. The teachings in them will surprise every Christian believer today. What we have to keep in mind is that our 4 gospels which we have today were not the earliest gospels of the early first century followers of "the Christ" but were rather written in refutation of these earliest gospels which were cherished by the first century followers of "the Christ".

**Answer for yourself:** How many gospels, if any, can be accurately traced to the apostles of the early church?

Of the numerous gospels which were in circulation in the second century, not more than three can

**with any certainty, or with any high degree of probability, be traced back to the times of the apostles.**

**Answer for yourself:** What are the names of these 3 gospels which can be traced to the earliest apostles and followers of "the Christ" in the first century?

**These are:**

- **The Gospel of Paul,**
- **The Gospel or Recollections of Peter, and**
- **The Oracles or Sayings of Christ, attributed to Matthew.**

Let us examine these in detail and let us see what if any differences in the teachings concerning "the Christ" can be found in them when compared with the 4 gospels we have today which as we have shown originated in the later part of the second century.

Let us continue our study with the Gospel of Paul in the second article in this series.

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## THE LOST GOSPELS OF THE FIRST CENTURY #2

For nearly 2,000 years, all we objectively knew of Jesus came to us primarily through the Biblical Gospels. And yet, for all this time, a great and enduring enigma has loomed over these lofty works. In the fourth century, the ruling authorities of Rome decided which of the countless texts, based on Christ's teachings in circulation at that time, would make up the present-day Bible and deciding once and for all, in effect, which works were to be judged as authoritative and which were not. This decision, unfortunately, carried the undeniable taint of political compromise, and the Bishops making these decisions were doing so at the direct command of the Roman Emperor, and their future financial and social well-being was, and everyone agrees, entirely under his control. It has been whispered ever since the fourth century that much of the true message of Jesus was edited out at that time, due to the oppressive and theologically obtuse influence of Constantine.

The Christian scriptures that failed to be admitted into the Bible were then outlawed, collected, and destroyed. Prior to 325 AD, however, many of the early Church fathers had included in their writings mention of an earlier Gospels, upon which they claimed in near-perfect unison, the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke had all been based. Mentioned or quoted from by such well-known church fathers as Papias, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Basil, Epiphanius, Eusebius, and St. Jerome, these documents will not make it into the Roman Second New Testament yet modern scholarship is showing us today not only the existence of these early gospels which were cherished by the earliest Christians of the first and early second century but that they also contain a more accurate picture of "the Christ" which the earliest Christians believed in with all their might. Most surprisingly is that when we look into these earliest gospels we find a completely different depiction of not only "the Christ" but of "Jesus Christ" as well. It is to these matters that we not turn.

## THE GOSPEL OF PAUL

Georg Heinrich August von Ewald, one of the best of the German critics and theologians of the 19th century, concludes that there was a Gospel of Paul which was written in the Greek language, and that it may have been written by the evangelist Philip. It may be inferred that it afterward became incorporated into the Gospel of Marcion (A. D. 145), since Marcion was a follower of Paul, and for his own gospel claimed the sanction of that apostle. Marcion was a native of Sinope, a town of Asia Minor, on the south shore of the Black Sea. It is supposed that the church at Sinope was furnished by Paul, at the time of its formation, with a collection such as he supplied to the other Asiatic churches; containing records of the life and teachings of "the Christ". What is important for us to notice right off the bat is that it was the opinion of Jerome, and of several other writers, that when Paul spoke of his gospel, (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2d Thess. 2:14,) he referred to a written gospel then in circulation.

*Rom 2:16 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (KJV)*

*Rom 16:25 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (KJV)*

*II Th 2:14 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

Paul may have had such a gospel in mind; but his language is not sufficiently explicit to justify us in concluding, with any certainty, that he meant any thing more than that gospel of which he was the great expounder.

There is, however, a more distinct trace of the Gospel of Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 11, vv. 23 to 25.

*1 Cor 11:23-25 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (KJV)*

By comparing this passage with Luke 22:19-20, it will be seen that the language is almost identical.

*Luke 22:19-20 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (KJV)*

What is surprising is that when we consult the parallel passages in Matt. 26:26-28, and Mark 14:22-24, have no such complete similarity, though the idea is the same.

*Matt 26:26-28 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (KJV)*

*Mark 14:22-24 22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. (KJV)*

Present in these later Gospels of Matthew and Mark but yet missing from the earlier accounts of Paul and our current Gospel of Luke are the references to the existence of any "New Testament" and the references of "remembering the Christ". Added to these later Gospels are the ideas of the remission of sins which is lacking in Paul and the Gospel of Luke.

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not appear that the Gospel of Luke, whether directly, or through Marcion's gospel, was founded partly upon the Epistles of Paul or possibly a Gospel of Paul?

That Paul had something to do with a written gospel, which now appears, in whole or in part, in the compilation of Luke, is generally acknowledged; and this passage in First Corinthians above, taken in connection with the corresponding passage in Luke, is strong evidence that in Corinthians Paul refers to a written gospel, which he had "delivered" to the church at Corinth, and a portion of which written gospel appears in Luke 22:19-20 as seen above. So it would appear that Georg Heinrich August



von Ewald was correct in the 19th century when he suggested that behind the Gospel of Luke is an earlier Gospel of Paul which existed in a written form. Today's modern scholarship acknowledges without a doubt the influence of Paul upon the later writing of the 4 Gospels.

Further proof of Paul's Gospel as an influence upon the later 4 Gospels can be found in Galatians 2:2 where Paul may have referred to this written Gospel:

*Gal 2:2 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. (KJV)*

This thesis receives countenance from a passage in Tertullian. In his work against Marcion (A. D. 200-210), after saying that Marcion did not ascribe his gospel to any author, and arguing thence that it was not authentic, he proceeds as follows:

“Had Marcion even published his gospel in the name of Paul himself, the single authority of the document, destitute of all support from preceding authorities, would not be a sufficient basis for our faith. There would still be wanting that gospel which Paul found in existence, to which he yielded his belief, and with which he so earnestly wished his own to agree, that he actually on that account went up to Jerusalem, to know and consult the apostles ‘lest he should run or had been running in vain;’ in other words, that the faith which he had learned and the gospel which he was preaching, might be in accordance with theirs. Then, at last, having conferred with the *authors*, and having agreed with them touching the rule of faith, they joined their hands in fellowship, and divided their labors thenceforth in the office of preaching the gospel, so that they were to go to the Jews, and Paul to the Jews and Gentiles. Inasmuch, therefore, as the enlightener of Luke himself desired the authority of his predecessors, for both his own faith and preaching, how much more may I not require from Luke’s Gospel, that which was necessary for the gospel of his master .”—(Tertullian adv. Marcion, bk. 4, ch. 2, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. 7, p. 180).

From this passage of Tertullian we can learn three things:

- **First, that there was a Gospel of Paul, and the inference is very strong that it was in writing; since Paul is represented as going to Jerusalem to compare his gospel with another, and while there, conferring with the “authors” of the other gospel,**
- **Secondly, that it was necessary, for the purpose of verification, that these two gospels should be compared; and,**
- **Thirdly, that all this was previous to the Gospel according to Luke. It might be inferred, from the closing portion of the paragraph, that Tertullian thought the Gospel of Luke itself stood in need of some verification.**

It does not follow, however, that the gospel with which Paul was so anxious to compare his own, was written before his. This is all the more evident when we find that the word “primitive” was inserted by the Ante-Nicene translator, in brackets, before the word “authors” [highlighted above]. Knowing this then we have to discard such an idea as spurious and unnecessary to the sense, and unauthorized to the original thought of Tertullian. (Tertull. Op1 tom. 1, p. 251).

**The opinion of Ewald is, that the Greek Gospel of Paul was the first ever written and it influenced the later writing of the Gospel of Luke.**

The testimony of Irenaeus (A.D. 190) concerning this gospel is, that it was written by Luke. *“Luke, also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him”* (Irenaeus, *V. Her.* bk. 3, ch. x, Ante-Nic. vol. 5, p.259).

In spite of the positive language here used, the statement is to be taken with some allowance. Irenaeus was fully

committed to the four gospels, and was engaged in endeavoring to give them authority. He may be said, in fact, to be the first to mention the 4 Gospels and to have introduced them to the notice of the literary world; since he is the first author who mentions them explicitly. He speaks frequently of these gospels, and argues that they should be four in number, neither more nor less, because there are four universal winds, and four quarters of the world.

Irenaeus cannot be trusted due to his bias for these 4 Gospels which all of a sudden appear with the pen of Irenaeus. He wishes us to believe that Paul's Gospel is the Gospel of Luke and not a separate one as many scholars believe today. Those who are so quick to receive the statement of Irenaeus that the Gospel of Paul was written by Luke, a statement manifestly made to give apostolic sanction to the Gospel of Luke, are not prepared to accept so readily his assertion that the ministry of Jesus lasted twenty years, and that he was fifty years old at his crucifixion (Iren. V. Haer. 2.22, Ante-Nic. vol. 5 p. 196). Statements like this from Irenaeus brings all that he says into doubt in my opinion. This is even more made clear by the gross and malicious misrepresentation of the Gnostic Christians by the pen of Irenaeus which only in the last 50 years have we seen so clearly with the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and the earlier Gnostic Gospels.

So it would appear that more than likely an earlier written Gospel of Paul existed which influenced Marcion's Gospel which was in the First New Testament and which provided the impetus for the later writing of the Gospel of Luke. The thing we have to remember in all of this is that the earliest Gospel of Marcion, which again patterned itself off this earlier Gospel of Paul, did not teach a "fleshly Christ" or a "fleshly Jesus" but rather a Gnostic Christ. Marcion's Gospel which is admittedly taken from an earlier Gospel of Paul teaches this Gnostic Christ which is completely different from the human Christ we find with the emergence of these later 4 Gospels which appear with Irenaeus in 190 A.D.

**Answer for yourself:** If Paul believed only in "the Christ within" and this was his gospel as we have seen on this website previously with many infallible proofs as shown by modern scholarship then what does this say about his trip to Jerusalem and the comparison of his gospel with the teachings of the gospel of the Jerusalem Church? Did James and the Jerusalem Church also believe in "the Christ within"?

**Answer for yourself:** If these two gospels (Jerusalem's and Paul's) were to be compared for similarity then is it possible that the earliest Christians in Jerusalem also believed in a "Gnostic Christ within" and not a historical Christ Jesus?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that these earliest Jerusalem believers were Gnostic in many regards as was Paul and we not know it today because of Rome's banishment and destruction of these early Gnostic Gospels which taught a Gnostic Christ and not a historical Christ Jesus?

We must NEVER forget that the earliest Jerusalem Church believed in the coming of an anointed messiah of Israel from the lineage of King David which was to be a mere man sent by God but they also believed in the presence of "the indwelling Christ" within mankind. This coming human messiah is not to be confused with "the Christ" hidden within every person to which Paul called mankind to awaken.

*Eph 5:14 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (KJV)*

*Col 1:26-27 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

This "hidden Christ within" was to be made known to the Gentiles through the ministry of Paul as he called them to awaken to the very presence of God within them through repentance and obedience to God. The Jews had the Torah and the presence of God and understood that they were the Temple of God as God's highest



creation. Speaking of the Gentiles Paul says:

***Eph 2:12 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (KJV)***

Yet it was the Gentiles who needed this awakening to the God within them and the New Testament alludes to the attempt to reach them in Acts 15-16 and the later Great Commission which went into all the world with the Covenant of Noah and the Laws of Noah which established this Covenant with the non-Jewish nations. In so doing mankind was made aware of "the Christ" within as their mediator between them and the God of all creation.

Now let us look to another of the earliest Gospels which we learn existed in the first century to which we have been deprived today as well: The Gospel or the Recollections of Peter in the next article.



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## THE LOST GOSPELS OF THE FIRST CENTURY #3

We continue our study into the early Gospels of the first century which are not in our Christian Bibles today.

### THE GOSPEL OR RECOLLECTIONS OF PETER.

This was a book more generally known than the Gospel of Paul, and of the existence of which there can be no doubt. **Now please pay attention to the Christian censorship which we now examine.**

In the year 190, a large number of these Gospels of Peter were found in use by the church of Rhossus, in Cilicia; and so much were the Christians of that church attached to them that it became necessary for Serapion, one of the bishops, **to suppress them,** and **to substitute the 4 canonical gospels in their stead** (Dr. Lardner's Works, vol. 4, p. 636; Theodoret, Fab. Haer. 2. 2; Euseb. Ecc. Hist. 6. 12; Lost and Hostile Gospels by S. Baring-Gould, p 245. Theodoret there says, the Nazarenes used the Gospel of Peter. He speaks as of his own day, A. D. 430).

**Answer for yourself:** Why hadn't the churches of Cilicia heard about these supposedly important 4 Gospels which were supposedly written by the Apostles before now? Why did it take almost 160 years to get these 4 Gospels to them? Why were they reading and cherishing other Gospels rather than these 4 Gospels which appear in 190 A.D. with Irenaeus?

Now we come to Eusebius whose honesty is severely in doubt. We date Eusebius to A.D. 325 and find him **speaking of the Gospel according to Peter, with other books**, where we notice carefully that he says:

“Neither among the ancient nor the ecclesiastical writers of our day, has there been one that has appealed to the testimony taken from them.” Again, in book 3, chapter 25, he speaks of the Gospel of Peter as among those that were “adduced (presented) by the heretics, under the name of the apostles,” and **“of which no one of those writers in the ecclesiastical succession, has condescended to make any mention in his works;”** and says, **“they are to be ranked not only among the spurious writings, but are to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious.”**—(Eccles. Hist. bk 3, ch. 3).

**Eusebius tells us that no other Church Father before him ever mentioned the Gospel of Peter and assures us that it is an outright forgery which is not to be trusted.**

Get ready for what comes next. Eusebius had a peculiar faculty for diverging from the truth. Let us see how far from it he has gone in these assertions:

#### **Justin Martyr:**

In Justin's Dialogue, written about A.D. 160, he says: “The mention of the fact, that Christ changed the name of Peter, one of the apostles, and that the event had been recorded in his **[Peter's] Memoirs**, together with his



having changed the name of two other brethren, who were sons of Zebedee, to Boanerges, tended to signify that he was the same through whom the surname Israel was given to Jacob, and Joshua to Hosea.”—(Dialogue with Trypho, ch. 106).

The translation, as given in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. 2, p. 233, is as follows:

“And when it is said that he changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter, and when it is written in the memoirs of Him that this so happened, as well as that he changed the name of other two brothers,” etc.

**The word “Him,” commencing with a capital letter, of course refers to Christ; thus making it read, the memoirs of Christ, and ignoring Peter as the author.**

Such a construction, besides referring the pronoun autou (of him), at the close of the sentence, to the more distant antecedent, contrary to the rule in such cases, attributes to Justin language which he is not in the habit of using. **Elsewhere, Justin, when speaking of the gospels which he cites so frequently, he calls them, not Memoirs of Christ, but “Memoirs of the Apostles.” He has ten times “Memoirs of the Apostles,” and five times “Memoirs ;” not once “Memoirs of Christ.”**

For the rendering we have adopted we have the authority of Dr. Westcott’ and other eminent scholars. Moreover, it is powerfully supported by the fact, that the only one of the canonical gospels which has this account of the change of the name of James and John to Boanerges, is **Mark, which has such an intimate connection with the Gospel of Peter.**

***Mark 3:17 17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: (KJV)***

Let us notice the connection between Peter and Mark:

Papias wrote: "Mark indeed, since he was the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, but not in order, the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterwards, as I have said, [heard and followed] Peter, who fitted his discourses to the needs [of his hearers] but not as if making a narrative of the Lord's sayings (logian); Consequently, Mark, writing some things just as he remembered, erred in nothing; for he was careful of one thing -- not to omit anything of the things he had heard or to falsify anything in them" (In Eusebius 3.39.15). From this we see that Papias clearly regarded Peter's preaching as the main source of Mark's witness.

**We conclude, therefore, that Justin Martyr here refers to the Memoirs or Recollections of Peter, which can be nothing else than the Gospel of Peter.** It was probably a consideration of this passage which induced Credner to say that Justin made use of this gospel (Geschicht, N.T. Kan. p. 22).

## **Tertullian:**

The next writer who refers to the Gospel of Peter, is Tertullian (A. D. 200-210). He was one of the three fathers who were engaged in establishing the canonical gospels. **And as Irenaeus had undertaken to confound the Gospel of Paul with the Gospel of Luke, so Tertullian endeavors to identify the Gospel of Peter with the Gospel of Mark.** He says:

***“The Gospel which Mark published is affirmed to be Peter’s, whose interpreter Mark was (Tertullian, Ad. Marcion, 4.5).***

The original is as translated in the Ante-Nicene collection, ***“That [gospel] which Mark published, may be affirmed to be Peter’s, whose interpreter Mark was.”***

Tertullian, without a doubt, manifestly intended to assert that in his day the Gospel of Mark was understood to be Peter's, or to have the Gospel of Peter for its original.

## Origen:

The third father who referred to this Gospel, was Origen, A.D. 230.

“There are some,” says he, “who say the brethren of Christ [here mentioned] were the children of Joseph by a former wife, who lived with him before Mary; and they are induced to this opinion by some *passages in that which is entitled the Gospel of Peter*, or The Book of James.”—(Com. on Matt. 13. 55).

Thus we find the Gospel of Peter expressly referred to by three of the fathers before Eusebius, though that historian asserts that no one of them had condescended to make any mention of it.

Eusebius exhibited a still more reckless disregard for the truth, in regard to the Preaching of Peter. He made a similar sweeping assertion respecting that; while the fact was, it, the Gospel of Peter, had been mentioned by Heraclion and Lactantius, and six times by Clement of Alexandria, and every time with indications of approval. It may be well to mention an error of some writers, in supposing the Preaching of Peter and the Preaching of Paul to be one book, or parts of the same book, merely from their being mentioned in the same connection by Lactantius. Such an inference is not authorized.

Other writers have mentioned this gospel. Theodoret (A. D. 430) says, *“The Nazarenes are Jews who venerate Christ as a just man merely, and it is said they use the Gospel according to Peter (Haer. Fab. 2.2)*

Credner thinks the gospel was one of the oldest writings of the church, and the source from which Justin Martyr drew many of his quotations; also that it was essentially identical with the Harmony of Tatian, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews. (Gesch. d. N.T. Kanon. p. 22).

Dr. Mill says it was publicly read by the Christians (Prolegom. in Nov. Test., sec. 335); and Mr. Whiston asserts that it was probably, in some sense, a sacred book (Essay on the Constitutions of the Apostles, p. 24).

The Gospel of Peter favored the opinions of the Doceta, who held that Christ and Jesus were different; that Jesus really suffered, but Christ only in appearance.

## *The Gospel of Peter*

*IV. 10 And they brought two malefactors, and crucified the 11 Lord between them. But he kept silence, as one feeling no pain. And when they set the cross upright, they wrote*

The above passage is very telling. This expresses the earliest account of the Passion that exists. Notice that it is not by today's standards wholly orthodox: for it throws doubt on the reality of the Lord's sufferings, and by consequence upon the reality of his human body. In other words it is, as Serapion of Antioch indicated, of a Docetic character. Accordingly we see from this early Gospel of Peter that the body of Christ was not subject to human needs. He is the good Physician; the medicine which he offers is the communication of saving gnosis, leading men from heathenism to faith and from faith to the higher state of knowledge. This true philosophy includes within itself the freedom from sin and the attainment of virtue. As all sin has its root in ignorance, so the knowledge of God and of goodness is followed by well-doing.

Rev. S. Baring-Gould asks the question, “Was this gospel a corrupted edition of St. Mark?” and answers it



**thus: “Probably not. We have not much ground on which to base an opinion, but there is just sufficient to make it likely that such was not the case” (Lost and Hostile Gospels, p.221).**

**So we find without a doubt the existence of the early Gospel of Peter which the earliest Christians read which teaches that there was a difference between "the Christ" and Jesus. This reinforces the earliest Gnostic beliefs of the earliest Christians before Rome "literalizes" the Christ and inserts a human Christ Jesus into a timeline of its own making.**

**Now let us examine the Oracles or the Sayings of the Christ from the first century.**



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# THE LOST GOSPELS OF THE FIRST CENTURY #4

## THE ORACLES OR SAYINGS OF CHRIST

Our information concerning this collection, is exceedingly meager; being based entirely upon a passage in Eusebius, in which Papias is represented as saying, *“Matthew set forth the Oracles in the Hebrew dialect, which every one interpreted as he was able”* (Euseb. Ecc. Hist. bk. 3. 39).

Answer for yourself: What exactly is this Hebrew oracle supposedly written by the Apostle Matthew? Is it our current Gospel of Matthew or was it something else? Did it teach the same things about a historical Jesus or was its "Christ" a Gnostic Christ? Well that would be something if we could determine that the true Apostle Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew about the "Gnostic Christ" and not a human Jesus. So let us examine this in detail. Lets look at the passage from Papias in its totality:

*And the presbyter said this: Mark the interpreter of Peter, wrote down exactly, but not in order, what he remembered of the acts and sayings of the Lord, for he neither heard the Lord himself nor accompanied him, but, as I said, Peter later on. Peter adapted his teachings to the needs [of his hearers], but made no attempt to provide a connected narrative of things related to our Lord. So Mark made no mistake in setting down some things as he remembered them, for he took care not to omit anything he heard nor to include anything false. As for Matthew, he made a collection in Hebrew of the sayings and each translated them as best they could* (Guignebert, Jesus, p 39 Schonfield, The Passover Plot, p 230-231).

The above passage taken from Papias is the earliest tradition regarding the composition of both Mark and Matthew. According to Papias, Mark got his information from Peter himself, while Matthew, one of Jesus original disciples, made a collection of the sayings of Jesus and wrote them down in the Hebrew dialect. While it is very probable that the gospel of Mark Papias referred to is the very same gospel we are familiar with, Papias statement regarding the gospel of Matthew leaves serious room for doubt. For he mentioned that Matthew collected the sayings of Jesus. Notice he did not say that Matthew wrote a biography of Jesus not a detailed account of the life and ministry of "the Christ" but only collected the "teachings" and "sayings" of Christ Jesus.

Answer for yourself: Why is this so important?

The present gospel of Matthew in our New Testaments is a narrative of Jesus' life and not simple a collection of his sayings. Furthermore linguistic evidence shows that the original language of Matthew's gospel was Greek not Hebrew or Aramaic. More importantly we do not know who John the Presbyter was or how he got to know about the authorship of Mark and Matthew. As such we have no guarantee as to the authenticity of this tradition (Guignebert, Jesus, p 39-40).



**Papias, writing early in the second century**, refers to an earlier form of our gospel when he says that *'Matthew compiled the oracles in a Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted (translated?) them as best he could'* (Eusebius, H.E. 3, 39, 17). This statement seems to **imply the existence of various Greek versions in Papias' time; our current gospel of Matthew would then be one of these.** We do not know exactly what 'oracles' means; it usually is used of Old Testament prophecies understood in relation to Jesus, but by extension it may also have included the words, teachings and **"sayings" of "the Christ"** himself (quite like the Gospel of Thomas which is a Gnostic Gospel). Against Papias, it has been claimed, however, that **our current Matthew cannot be a translation from Hebrew or Aramaic especially since it is written in a clear Greek which reflects an advance over Mark's style and language.**

Mahlon H. Smith, in The Canonical Status of Q states: *"...Eusebius of Caesarea...quotes (ca. 350 CE) this vague one-line assertion from Papias' no longer extant five volume exegesis of the sayings (logia) of Jesus."* He goes on to say: *"Papias did not claim that Matthew wrote any story of Jesus' birth, baptism, miracles, passion or resurrection; on the contrary, his choice of words describes the act of compiling a sayings collection like Q rather than composing a narrative gospel like canonical Matthew."*

**Answer for yourself:** Are we to assume that these "sayings" of "the Christ" which was written in Hebrew is the Q source of oral traditions that we are familiar with today? Not necessarily as we see below.

That Papias' "Matthew" was equivalent to Q is a fairly common suggestion, but the problem is, there is no evidence to assume that Q was ever in a language other than Greek.

**Answer for yourself:** Who was the first early Christian father to connect Papias comment about a Hebrew collection of sayings of "the Christ" to the Gospel of Matthew which we are familiar with today? Irenaeus in 180 A.D. We need to look into this statement of Irenaeus and we will below.

Mahlon H. Smith, in The Canonical Status of Q states: *"As far as we can tell, Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 190) was the first to equate Papias' testimony with a 'gospel' of Matthew. Yet the nature of this 'gospel' is uncertain, since (a) it is presented as a parallel to the oral 'preaching' of Peter and Paul and (b) the contents are left unspecified. In antiquity a written 'gospel' could be anything from a sayings collection (like the Gospel of Thomas) to a compilation of independent anecdotes (like Signs) to a connected biographical narrative (like Luke) to a theological treatise (like the Valentinian 'Gospel of Truth'). So it cannot be taken for granted that the 'gospel' Irenaeus refers to was coextensive with the contents of canonical Matthew."*

## THE GOSPEL OF THE HEBREWS

**Many modern scholars and researchers think that Papias' Matthew might actually have been the Gospel of the Hebrews.**

Frank C. Tribbe, in his Portrait of Jesus, 1983, states: *"...The Gospel of the Hebrews written sometime after 100, was subsequently lost; but it was in existence during the life of St. Jerome (347-420), who was the principal translator of the Vulgate edition of the Bible."*

Similarities with the Gospel of Thomas [i.e., the contents of Logion 12] suggests "that the Gospel of the Hebrews made use of the Gospel of Thomas to create narrative. Or, more likely, that both the Gospel of the Hebrews and the Gospel of Thomas had **access to some similar materials from an existing oral tradition.**"

This reference to the "oral tradition" should jog our memory as to the importance of the oral traditions of the sayings of "the Christ" as we saw when we looked at each of the early Church Fathers and their writings along with their failure to mention explicitly any of the 4 Gospels which we have today. Let us remember that up until Irenaeus in 180 A.D. no mention was ever made of any of the current 4 Gospels which we have today and all prior references by all the early Church Fathers from Ignatius through Justin Martyr always alluded ONLY to the oral traditions and "sayings" of Christ Jesus and never made any reference to any of these 4 Gospels which we have today.

Now we come to an interesting note that leads us to believe that the earliest Gospel of the Hebrews (which is the aramaic-Hebrew gospel or "logia" of which Papias speaks was Gnostic in character. It is this Gospel of Hebrew to which Papias refers although Irenaeus will say differently. Because of Irenaeus' influence in believing the Papias reference to the Hebrew "sayings" was the Gospel of Matthew we seldom look deeply as to if he was mistaken. Irenaeus, being vehemently anti-Gnostic, would not and could not accept any Gospel which would say:

*"Just now my mother, the holy spirit, took me by one of my hairs and brought me to Tabor, the great mountain." - Hebrews 4a*

"This gospel's depiction of the holy spirit as female is striking. The Gospel of Hebrews 4c, 4d, and 4e explain that the Semitic word for 'spirit' is feminine in gender, but this way of portraying the spirit is due to more than a peculiarity of Hebrew grammar. This distinctive depiction of the spirit as "feminine" is rooted in Jewish Gnosticism and further speculation about divine Wisdom, a female personification of one of God's attributes who was believed to dwell with 'holy souls' (The Complete Gospels, Robert J. Miller (Ed.), p. 428). This emphasis upon feminine wisdom is a hallmark of early Gnostic Judaism & Christianity so we can infer from this that Papias, when mentioning a early Hebrew writing containing the sayings of "the Christ" more than likely had strong Gnostic overtones in its theology. This explains why Papias statement is later connected by men like Irenaeus (anti-Gnostic to the core) to a Greek Gospel of Matthew which is proto-Roman refutation of early Gnostic Christianity.

Answer for yourself: Did Irenaeus make a mistake when he determined that the Hebrew sayings of "the Christ" to which Papias references was the Gospel of Matthew and did he do this on purpose to cover up the Gnostic Christ?

In The Other Gospels, Ron Cameron provides the following information: *"The Gospel of the Hebrews may have been known to Papias (a church writer who died ca. 130 C.E., whose five-volume 'Exegesis of the Sayings of the Lord' is now lost, preserved only in a few quotations in the writings of Eusebius). Hegesippus (late in the second century) and Eusebius (early in the fourth century) attest to the existence of this gospel, but do not quote from it. Fragments are preserved in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (late in the second century), Origen (early in the third century), and Cyril (Bishop of Jerusalem, ca. 350 C.E.). Jerome (ca. 400 C.E.) also preserves several fragments, all of which he probably reproduced from the writings of Origen. The extent of this gospel is no longer known. According to the list of 'canonical' and 'apocryphal' books drawn up by Nicephorus (Patriarch of Constantinople, 806-818 C.E.), the Gospel of the Hebrews contained 2200 lines, only 300 fewer than Matthew!"*

Unlike other Jewish-Christian gospels, the Gospel of the Hebrews shows no dependence upon the Gospel of Matthew. The story of the first resurrection appearance to James the Just suggests that the Jewish-Christian community that produced this document claimed James as their founder. It is reasonable to assume that the remainder of the gospel is synoptic in flavor. The Gospel of the Hebrews seems to be independent of the New Testament in the quoted portions; unfortunately, since the gospel is not extant, it is difficult to know whether unquoted portions of the Gospel of the Hebrews might show signs of dependence.



Cameron makes these observations on dating and provenance: *"The earliest possible date of the composition of the Gospel of the Hebrews would be in the middle of the first century, when Jesus traditions were first being produced and collected as part of the wisdom tradition. The latest possible date would be in the middle of the second century, shortly before the first reference to this gospel by Hegesippus and the quotations of it by Clement and Origen. Based on the parallels in the morphology of the tradition, an earlier date of composition is more likely than a later one. Internal evidence and external attestation indicate that Egypt was its place of origin."*

**Answer for yourself:** Why would Irenaeus purposely not ascribe to Papias' statement the Gospel of Hebrew but rather a later creation called the Gospel of Matthew? Simply because the Gospel of the Hebrew was Gnostic in many places.

"The Gospel of the Hebrews has a distinctive Christology. Christ and his mother both existed before their appearance on earth in human form (Gospel of the Hebrews 1). At his baptism, Jesus is addressed as son, not by God, but by the spirit, which turns out to be his mother (Gospel of the Hebrews 3,4). Jesus [as the manifestation of "the Christ"] is not merely lead by the spirit (as in Luke's gospel). He is completely united with her: 'the whole fountain of the holy spirit came down and rested on him' (Gospel of the Hebrews 3)." (The Complete Gospels, Robert J. Miller (Ed.), p. 428). So we see that the Gospel of the Hebrews, to which Papias referred as the "logia" or the "sayings of the Lord in Hebrew" is not our current Gospel of Matthew. Also of note is that this earliest Gospel of the Hebrews of the earliest church and followers of "the Christ" had a distinctive Gnostic flavor which is completely reversed with our current Gospel of Matthew today which mysteriously appears with Irenaeus in 180 A.D. and is never mentioned by any earlier Church Father or writer before Irenaeus.

Herman N. Ridderbos writes (Matthew, p. 7): *This means, however, that we can no longer accept the traditional view of Matthew's authorship. At least two things forbid us to do so. First, the tradition maintains that the true Matthew authored an Aramaic writing, while the standpoint I have adopted does not allow us to regard our Greek text as a translation of an Aramaic original. Second, it is extremely doubtful that an eyewitness like the apostle Matthew would have made such extensive use of material as a comparison of the two Gospels indicates. Mark, after all, did not even belong to the circle of the apostles. Indeed Matthew's Gospel surpasses those of the other synoptic writers neither in vividness of presentation nor in detail, as we would expect in an eyewitness report, yet neither Mark nor Luke had been among those who had followed Jesus from the beginning of His public ministry.*

Francis Write Beare notes (The Gospel according to Matthew, p. 7): *But the dependence of the book upon documentary sources is so great as to forbid us to look upon it as the work of any immediate disciple of Jesus. Apart from that, there are clear indications that it is a product of the second or third Christian generation. The traditional name of Matthew is retained in modern discussion only for convenience.* What we find here is that the writer of the Gospel of Matthew who wrote in Greek used the prior Gospel of Mark as a blueprint for his writings. This is called the Synoptic Problem. Any serious discussion of the Synoptic Gospels must, sooner or later, involve a discussion of the literary interrelationships among Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is essential in order to see how an author used his sources (both for reliability sake as well as for redactional criticism), as well as when he wrote. It is quite impossible to hold that the three synoptic gospels were completely independent from each other. In the least, they had to have shared a common oral tradition. But the vast bulk of NT scholars today would argue for much more than that. There are four crucial arguments which virtually prove literary interdependence:

- Agreement in wording between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke

The remarkable verbal agreement between the gospels suggests some kind of interdependence. It is popular today among laymen to think in terms of independence-and to suggest either that the writers simply recorded what happened and therefore agree, or that they were guided by the Holy Spirit into writing the same things. This explanation falls short on several fronts.

- **Agreement in Order of Events**

Although there is a great deal of disagreement in the order of the pericopae among the synoptic gospels, there is an even greater amount of agreement. If one argues that the order is strictly chronological, there are four pieces of data which overrule this. First, there is occasional disagreement in the order. For example, many of Matthew's parables in chapter 13 are found in Luke 8 or Luke 13. The scribe who approached Jesus about the great commandment is placed in the Passion Week in Matthew and Mark, and vaguely arranged elsewhere in Luke. Second, it is evident that quite a bit of material is grouped topically in the gospels-e.g., after the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew come several miracles by Jesus. Indeed, "Matthew has furthermore arranged his entire Gospel so that collections of narratives alternate with collections of sayings." Third, the early patristic writers (e.g., Papias) recognized that the gospel writers did not follow a strict chronological arrangement. Fourth, there is a studied reserve in the gospels from pinpointing the dates of the various incidents. Introductory comments such as, "immediately," "after this," "on another occasion," "one day," etc. are the norm. In other words, there seems to be no intent on the part of the evangelists to present a strict chronological sequence of events.

- **Agreement in Parenthetical Material**

"One of the most persuasive arguments for the literary interdependence of the synoptic Gospels is the presence of identical parenthetical material, for it is highly unlikely that two or three writers would by coincidence insert into their accounts exactly the same editorial comment at exactly the same place." One of the most striking of these demonstrates, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the use of written documents: "When you see the desolating sacrilege . . . (let the reader understand) . . ." (Matt 24:15/Mark 13:14). It is obvious that this editorial comment could not be due to a common oral heritage, for it does not say, "let the hearer understand." Cf. also Matt 9:6/Mark 2:10/Luke 5:24; Matt 27:18/Mark 15:10.

- **Luke's Preface**

Luke begins his gospel in a manner similar to ancient historians: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative . . . it seemed good to me also . . . to write an orderly account for you . . ." In the least this implies two things:

- (1) Luke was aware of written (and oral) sources based on eyewitness accounts;
- (2) Luke used some of these sources in the composition of his gospel.

We shall see later that before the Gospels were written there did exist a period in which the gospel materials were passed on orally, and it is clear that this oral tradition influenced not only the first of our synoptic Gospels but the subsequent ones as well. As an explanation for the general agreement between Matthew-Mark-Luke, however, such an explanation is quite inadequate. There are several reasons for this. For one the exactness of the wording between the synoptic Gospels is better explained by the use of written sources than oral ones. Second, the parenthetical comments that these Gospels have in common are hardly explainable by means of oral tradition. This is especially true of Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, which addresses the readers of these works! Third and most important, the extensive agreement in the memorization of the gospel traditions by both missionary preachers and laypeople is conceded by all, it is most doubtful that this involved the memorization of a whole gospel account in a specific order. Memorizing individual pericopes, parables, and sayings, and even small collections of such material, is one thing, but memorizing a whole Gospel of such material is something else. The large extensive agreement in order between the synoptic Gospels is best explained by the use of a common literary source. Finally, as has already been pointed out, whereas Luke 1:2 does refer to an oral period in which the gospel materials were transmitted, Luke explicitly mentions his own investigation of written



sources.

Before we close we need to listen to a little more of what Irenaeus now has to say on this issue. We know that Irenaeus had read Papias, and it is most likely that Irenaeus was guided by the statement he found there. That statement in Papias itself is considered to be unfounded because the Gospel of Matthew was written in Greek and relied largely upon Mark, not the author's first-hand experience.

It is important to take note that Irenaeus, around the year 180 gave the first historically documented list of the four gospels and their authors:

*Matthew published his gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his breast [John 13:25;21:20], himself produced his gospel, when he was living in Ephesus in Asia (McDowell, More Than a Carpenter, p 64).*

**Answer for yourself:** Why is the above statement by Irenaeus so important?

The above passage by Irenaeus was also the first to give a chronological sequence of the writing of the four gospels: Matthew wrote first, followed by Mark, Luke and, finally, John. Like Papias, Irenaeus placed Matthew as the earliest gospel. This tradition of Matthew's primacy was repeated throughout Christian history.

The church father, Clement of Alexandria (c150-c215), said that the earliest gospels were those with Jesus' family tree. We find Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark.

Another church father, Origen (c185-254), said that the first gospel was written in Hebrew by Matthew.

Augustine (354-430), one of the most important theologians of early Christianity, stated that Mark copied and abbreviated Matthew.

It is because of this tremendous weight of tradition that it became established as a "fact" that Matthew was the earliest gospel and that its author was the apostle of Jesus himself (Bentley, Secrets of Mount Sinai, p140-142; Wilson, Jesus: The Evidence, p 33).

**Answer for yourself:** Is what we have read by Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, and Augustine true: Was Matthew the first gospel to be written? No!

## THE PRIORITY OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK OVER THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The traditional belief that Matthew was the earliest gospel written was finally shown to be false in 1835 by the German philologist and textual critic, Karl Lachman (1793-1851). He presented compelling evidence that the gospel of Mark was the earliest of the synoptics and that the authors of Matthew and Luke copied extensively from it. Given below is the evidence:

- The order of both Luke and Matthew are dependent on Mark which indicates Mark's priority
- The vocabulary of these two are also dependent upon Mark.
- The content of Mark is almost completely copied by Matthew and Luke.
- It can be seen from many passages that Matthew abbreviates Mark

- Sometimes Matthew trips over himself by attempting to improve on Mark.
- The Style of Mark is more primitive and theologically less developed than the other two synoptics

Eusebius says further, that Papias wrote five books of "Expositions Of The Oracles Of The Lord." These are a part of the multitude of lost writings of those times.

## SUMMARY

**THE GOSPEL OF PAUL**, though it does not stand out so clearly and indisputably as the Gospel of Peter, has yet sufficient evidence of having been one of the gospels of the first century. It is testified to by Marcion, and is apparently alluded to by Irenaeus and Tertullian, and by Paul himself. It was in the Greek language.

**THE GOSPEL OF THE RECOLLECTIONS OF PETER**, was a book well known, and of high authority among the ancient Christians. Even after the introduction of the four gospels afterward made canonical, the Gospel of Peter maintained so firm a footing that it became necessary to suppress it in some of the churches. It was retained and used by the Nazarenes, long afterward.

It is cited by Justin Martyr, and referred to by Tertullian and Origen. **The statement of Eusebius, that no one of the ecclesiastical writers had appealed to testimony taken from it, and that no one of them had condescended to make any mention of it, is untrue and a lie.** The Gospel of Peter is highly spoken of by Dr. Mill, Mr. Whiston, and other eminent writers. Credner, a German writer of high authority, thinks it was used by Justin Martyr, A. D. 150-160.

**THE ORACLES, OR SAYINGS OF CHRIST**, in the Aramaic language, we know but little about. It has been generally conceded, on the authority of Eusebius, that Papias (A. D. 125) had such a book, and that he wrote commentaries upon it.

Again in closing we need look at the doctrines contained in these earliest Gospels and compare them with the doctrines being taught today about "the Christ".

- **There is no evidence that any of these gospels taught the miraculous conception.**
- **There is no evidence that any of these gospels taught the the material resurrection of Christ.**
- **There is no evidence that any of these gospels of accounts of Christ's miracles, or any reference to any book containing such accounts or teaching either of these doctrines.**

**It will be seen as we proceed, that the three gospels which have been considered, were the germs of 'the three synoptic gospels, respectively. That is, the Gospel of Paul was the germ of the Gospel according to Luke; the Gospel of Peter, of the Gospel according to Mark; and the Oracles, of the Gospel according to Matthew.**

**They cannot, however, in any sense, be considered the same. The synoptic gospels were undoubtedly written long afterward, and contained, in many respects, very different material and theologies. Moreover, the Gospel of Paul appears to have passed through the Gospel of Marcion before reaching the author of Luke, and the Oracles through the Gospel of the Hebrews before reaching the author of Matthew.**

**Let us not forget that these three earliest gospels were later rejected by a proto-Catholic literalistic anti-Gnostic Rome and in their place we received the Synoptic Gospels of a much later creation at the hands of men like Irenaeus and others and in so doing the truths concerning God's Christ were lost and changed and idolatry is instituted in place of God's truth concerning the Christ within!**





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# THE SCHOLARS SPEAK CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT...HAVE YOU HEARD THEM?

**Again we need to think and answer some questions before we proceed:**

- 1. What is the truth?**
- 2. Who has the truth? Is it your Pastor or televangelist? Could it possibly be the scholar?**
- 3. Is the truth what we usually hear in our churches and over television or read today in the "top ten" of our corner Christian book store, or could the truth be buried in archeology, history, and antiquity and few today know of it today?**
- 4. Are the popular accounts and superficial rhetoric heard today by those today who never knew, investigated, or studied in-depth such fields as archeology, biblical history, biblical linguistics, and antiquity to be considered more trustworthy than the actual examination of the earliest documents first hand and those who originally wrote the documents and were closer to the events at hand than contemporary commentators?**
- 5. Is it possible that those who lived in the earliest times and who wrote about the events of antiquity be closer to the truth than those, say, 2000 years later who wrote of the same events with denominational biases?**
- 6. Does the testimony of the earliest Church Fathers, when read, often incriminate themselves and their biases concerning the deceptions used in the formation of the New Testament Canon?**

Too many times our religious knowledge today (concerning the New Testament for example) in respect to spiritual matters is limited to our generation and our generation only. We seem to forget that the "top ten" at your corner Christian Book store pails in comparison to a scholarly book. Too much "denominational bias" and "party line theology" occupy the bookshelves today. Most Christians I know have never read a scholarly Biblical book in their life, but yet to listen to them, they have all truth because the Holy Spirit led them to it. This always amuses me when the same Holy Spirit has evidently led almost 2 billion people into the idolatrous worship of a sungod man as "Jesus" is depicted in the New Testament let alone the worship of Mary as well.

Over the years of intense study I have seen first-hand how we have lost more knowledge than we currently possess. Even in Seminary I was beginning to get the "drift" that all is not what it is made out to be thanks to credible and honest professors who walked a thin line between their "paychecks" and truth.

Those who consider themselves "knowledgeable" today concerning the Christian religion seldom seem to know more than rhetoric or their "denominational company line." **Antiquity possesses the truths we look for if we would only look into the history of our inherited Christian faith and our inherited religious documents; for much of what we would find if we did so is a blatant contradiction to what we have been taught today.** Our complacency and our laziness to search out these matters to see if we have been taught the truth has robbed us of this precious commodity. Sadly few of us even know that such inquiry is necessary since being taught since childhood that we have the truth and that others do not.

In this article I wish to deal with the subject of our Christian Canon of Scripture. **The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning, that is from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history.** The Canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is the result of a development, of a **process** at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the Church, and retarded by certain obscurities and natural hesitations, and which did not reach its final term until the dogmatic definition of the Tridentine Council. The Council of Trent (Italian: Trento) was an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church held in discontinuous sessions between 1545 and 1563 in response to the Protestant Reformation. It clearly specified Catholic doctrines on salvation, the sacraments and the **Biblical canon**, in opposition to the Protestants, and standardized the Mass throughout the church, largely abolishing local variations; this became called the Tridentine Mass, after Trent.

## **DISTURBING QUOTES FROM SCHOLARS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE CANON WE HAVE TODAY**

The following I provide to provoke your thinking. These men saw severe problems with the Canon and New Testament which most likely you, the reader, have not seen yet. Again, your inability to see these problems does not negate their existence. It is our hope at Bet Emet Ministries that once reading these quotes you will awaken to the personal need of serious study into the document you have accepted "by faith" without your personal investigation and verification. **Let us see what the scholars have to say about the book we trust for our Eternal Life in Western Christianity today.**

"And no other Pope, Bishop or Father (until Irenaeus), for nearly a century after "Pope Clement," ever mentions or quotes a Gospel, or names Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. So for a century and a half-until the books bobbed up in the hands of Bishop St. Irenaeus and were tagged as "Gospels according to" this or that Apostle, there exists not a word of them in all the tiresome tomes of the Fathers. It is humanly and divinely impossible that the "Apostolic authorship" and hence "canonicity" or divine inspiration of these Sacred Four should have remained, for a century and a half, unknown and unsuspected by every Church, Father, Pope and Bishop of Christendom-if existent. Even had they been somewhat earlier in existence, never an inspired hint or human suspicion was there, that they were "Divine" or "Apostolic," or any different from the scores of "apocryphal or pseudo-Biblical writings with which the East especially had been flooded"; that they were indeed "Holy Scripture." Hear this notable admission: "It was not until about the middle of the second century that under the rubric of Scripture the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old"! (Catholic Encyclopedia. iii, 275), that is, became regarded as apostolic, sacred, inspired and canonical, or "Scriptures" (Joseph Wheless, **Forgery In Christianity**, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 182-183).

"In the Twentieth Century it is astounding to hear Christian people declare that the Bible and particularly the New Testament , says so-and-so, and that therefore it must be true. Do they not understand that the New Testament is a collection of books of varying credibility collected only in the Fourth Century A.D., by clergy having the limited mentality of that very uncritical age" (Authur Weigall, **The Paganism in Our Christianity**, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1928, p. 34).



**"The Scriptures were in the hands of the clergy only, and they had every opportunity to insert whatsoever they pleased; thus we find them (New Testament) full of interpolations". Johann Solomo Semler, one of the most influential theologians of the eighteenth century, speaking of this, says: "The Christian doctors never brought their sacred books before the common people; although people in general have been wont to think otherwise; during the first ages, they were in the hands of the clergy only" (Robert Taylor, Diegesis, p. 48).**

**"All the earliest external evidences points to the conclusion that thy synoptic gospels are non-apostolic digesis of spoken and written apostolic tradition, and that the arrangement of the earlier material in orderly form took place only gradually and by many essays..." (T. W. Doane, Bible Myth And Their Parallels In Other Religions, The Truth Seeker Co., New York, 1882, p. 463.).**

**"Dr. Hooykaas, speaking of the four 'Gospels,' and 'Acts,' says of them: 'Not one of these five books was written by the person whose name it bears, and they are all of more recent date than the heading would lead us to suppose'" (T. W. Doane, Bible Myth And Their Parallels In Other Religions, The Truth Seeker Co., New York, 1882, p. 463.).**

**"We cannot say that the 'Gospels' and the book of 'Acts' are unauthentic, for not one of them professes to give the name of its author. They appeared anonymously. The titles placed above them in our Bibles owe their origin to an ecclesiastical tradition which deserves no confidence whatever" (Bible for Learners, vol. iii. pp. 24-25).**

**"These Gospels can hardly be said to have had authors at all. They had only editors or compilers. What I mean is, that those who enriched the old Christian literature with these Gospels did not go to work as independent writers and compose their own narratives out of the accounts they had collected, but simply took up the different stories or sets of stories which they found current in the oral tradition or already reduced to writing, adding here and expanding there, and so sent out into the world a very artless kind of composition. These works were then, from time to time, somewhat enriched by introductory material or interpolations from the hands of later Christians, and perhaps were modified a little here and there. Our first two Gospels appear to have passed through more than one such revision. The third, whose writer says in his preface, that 'many had undertaken to put together a narrative (Gospel),' before him, appears to proceed from a single collecting, arranging, and modifying hand" (Ibid., p. 29).**

**Concerning the time when the canon of the New Testament was settled, Mosheim says: "The opinions, or rather the conjectures, of the learned concerning the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume; as also about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these later times" (Mosheim, Vol. i. pt. 2, ch. ii).**

**"Dr. Lardner says: 'Even so late as the middle of the sixth century, the canon of the New Testament had not been settled by any authority that was decisive and universally acknowledged, but Christian people were at liberty to judge for themselves concerning the genuineness of writings proposed to them as apostolical, and to determine according to evidences'" (Credibility of the Gospels, T. W. Doane, Bible Myth And Their Parallels In Other Religions, The Truth Seeker Co., New York, 1882, p. 464.).**

**The learned Michaelis says: "No manuscript of the New Testament now extant is prior to the sixth century, and what is to be lamented, various readings which, as appears from the quotations of the Fathers, were in the text of the Greek Testament, are to be found in none of the manuscripts which are at present remaining" (Marsh's Michaelis, Vol. ii. p. 160).**

**Bishop Marsh says: "It is a certain fact, that several readings in our common printed text are nothing more than alterations made by Origen, whose authority was so great in the Christian Church (A.D. 230) that emendations which he proposed, though, as he himself acknowledged, they were supported by evidence of no manuscript, were very generally received" (Ibid., p. 368)**

**"Though Irenaeus, in the second century, is the first who mentions the evangelists, and Origen, in the third century, is the first who gives us a catalogue of the books contained in the New Testament, Mosheim's admission**

still stands before us. We have no grounds of assurance that the mere mention of the names of the evangelists by Irenaeus, or the arbitrary drawing up of a particular catalogue by Origen, were of any authority. It is still unknown by whom, or where, or when, the canon of the New Testament was settled. But in this absence of positive evidence we have abundance of negative proof. We know when it was not settled. We know it was not settled in the time of Emperor Justinian, nor in the time of Cassiodorus; that is, not at any time before the middle of the sixth century, by any authority that was decisive and universally acknowledged; but Christian people were at liberty to judge for themselves concerning the genuineness of writings proposed to them as apostolical" (T. W. Doane, Bible Myth And Their Parallels In Other Religions, The Truth Seeker Co., New York, 1882, p. 464.).

"The Bible (New Testament) has been received by the Protestants on the authority of the church of Rome, and on no other authority. It is she that has said it is the word of God." Ingersoll's Works, Vol 5, Ibid., p. 364.

"None of those books have the appearance of being written by the persons whose names they bear, neither do we know who the authors were. They come to us on no other authority than the church of Rome, which the Protestant Priests...call the Whore of Babylon." Ingersoll's Works, Vol 5, Ibid., p. 365.

"...the bishop who has answered me has been obliged to acknowledge the fact, that the Books that compose the NT, were voted by yeas and nays to be the word of God, as you now vote a law, by the Popish councils of Nicea and Laodicea, about 1,450 years ago." Interviews, Ingersoll's Works, Vol 5, Ibid. p. 325.

"I admit that books were voted in and out, and that the Bible was finally formed in accordance with a vote...." Interviews, Ingersoll's Works, Vol 5, p. 300.

"Nothing can exceed the credulity of the early fathers, unless it may be their ignorance. They believed everything that was miraculous. They believed everything except the truth....They revelled in the mishapen and the repulsive. They did not think it wrong to swear falsely in a good cause. They interpolated, forged, and changed the records to suit themselves, for the sake of Christ. They quoted from persons who never wrote. They misrepresented those who had written, and their evidence is absolutely worthless. They were ignorant, credulous, mendacious, fanatical, pious, unreasonable, bigoted, hypocritical, and for the most part insane." Interviews, Ingersoll's Works, Vol. 5, p. 273

"The great religious historian, Eusebius, ingenuously remarks that in his history he carefully omitted whatever tended to discredit the church, and that he piously magnified all that conduced to her glory." Interviews, Ingersoll's Works, Vol. 5, Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 293

"Now, Sir, it is impossible for serious men, to whom God has given the divine gift of reason, and who employs that reason to reverence and adore the God that gave it, it is I say, impossible for such a man to put confidence in a book that abounds with fable and falsehood as the New Testament does." The Life and Works of Thomas Paine, Vol. 9, p. 128

"Taylor's [Reverend Robert Taylor 1784 - 1844], conclusion is: 'As we see Protestantism to be a mere modification or reform of Popery, so Popery was nothing more than a similar modification or reform of Paganism. It is absolutely certain that the pagans were in possession of the whole Gospel story many ages before its JEWISH ORIGIN WAS PRETENDED; and it was not until the first error had been committed of suffering the people to become acquainted too intimately with the contents of the sacred books that it became necessary to invent a chronology, and to 'give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.'" H. Cutner [1881-1969], The Devil's Chaplain Robert Taylor (1784-1844), The Pioneer Press, c. 1950, 41.

"The gradual development of the canon, in our view, was primarily the achievement of gentile Christianity, although of course THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEW TESTAMENT IF AN OLD TESTAMENT HAD NOT ALREADY EXISTED. Among the earliest Christians there was no New Testament; their Bible consisted of the Old Testament alone." The Formation of the New Testament, Robert M. Grant, Harper & Row, 1965.

"Ironically, the more fully the individual documents of the NT have been understood, the LESS



**INTELLIGIBLE the NT as a whole has become, both historically and theologically." [13]. . . . from: The New Testament Canon, Harry Y. Gamble, Fortress, 1985. The New Testament Canon, Harry Y. Gamble, Fortress, 1985).**

**As von Harnack [Adolph von Harnack 1851 - 1930] has pointed out (The Origin of the New Testament [New York, 1925], p. 5), there were four possibilities open to the Church: [1] the Old Testament alone, [2] an enlarged Old Testament, [3] no Old Testament, and [4] a second authoritative collection." The Canon of the New Testament, Bruce M. Metzger, Oxford, 1987.**

**"...originally NONE OF THE DOCUMENTS NOW INCLUDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT HAD THE TITLES TO WHICH WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED in the headings of the different books in traditional English versions....Only after several Gospels or several Epistles had been collected together was there need for separate designations in order to distinguish one from another." The Canon of the New Testament, Bruce M. Metzger, Oxford, 1987, p. 302).**

**'With respect to attribution, the [apocryphal] books resemble Jewish midrashim and the Old Testament apocrypha. TO SECURE AUTHORITY OR CREDIBILITY, THEY ARE WRITTEN UNDER THE HONORARY NAME OF AN APOSTLE OR SOME OTHER PROMINENT FIGURE. Put flatly, THEY ARE FORGED, but then SO ARE MANY [ALL!] OF THE CANONICAL NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS..." The Secret Gospels A Harmony of Apocryphal Jesus Traditions, Edited and Translated by R. Joseph Hoffmann, Westminster College-Oxford, Prometheus, 1996.**

**The Catholic Encyclopedia is quoted saying: "Until the Council of Trent, in 1546, there was no infallibly defined sanction of inspiration of these Jewish "apocrypha"; like the "canon" sacred Books of the Hebrew Bible, all alike were more or less eclectically accepted and used in the True Church; but, as said: "The Tridentine decree from which the above list is extracted was the first infallible and effectually promulgated pronouncement on the Canon, addressed to the Church universal. Being dogmatic in its purport, it implies that the Apostles bequeathed the same Canon to the Church as a part of the depositum fidei.... We should search the pages of the New Testament in vain for any trace of such action.... We affirm that such a status points to Apostolic sanction, which in turn must have rested on revelation either by Christ or the Holy Spirit" (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. iii, 270.). This is luminous clerical reasoning: a lot of anonymous Jewish fables, derided by Jews and all the rest of the world for want of even common plausibility of fact or truth, and as to which the "inspired" Christian Books said to emanate from Apostles, are silent as the grave, are declared after 1500 years to have the earmarks of Apostolic sanction, which "must have" been founded on divine revelation to them "either by Christ or the Holy Spirit,"—which the Church claims are one and the same Person; and it is curious that the "infallible" Council couldn't say which was which, but vaguely and uncertainly opined it must have been one or the other. So much for infallible cock-suredness as to "inspiration" of Holy Scriptures. (Joseph Wheless, Forgery In Christianity, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 54).**

**"The New Testament and the inspired Apostles are silent on the subject (inspiration) and left the matter to serious doubts and disputations for many centuries : "There are no indications in the New Testament . . . Of a definite new Canon bequeathed by the Apostles to the Church, or of a strong self-witness to Divine inspiration," admits the CE. (iii, 274); that is, there is nothing in the 27 booklets which would lead to the suspicion of their "inspiration" or truth. There was then no Church for them to bequeath to, nor was the Canon settled, as we shall see: "It was not until about the middle of the second century— [when we shall see the books were really written]—that under the rubric of Scripture the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old.... But it should be remembered that the inspired character of the New Testament is a Catholic dogma, and must therefore in some way have been revealed to, and taught by, Apostles"! (Ibid., p.275.) This is a strikingly queer bit of clerical dialectic, and leaves the question of the "some way" of revelation to the Apostles and of their transmission of the "dogma" to posterity, in a nebulously unsatisfying state." (Joseph Wheless,Forgery In Christianity, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 97-98).**

**"Further, the dubious and disputed status of the sacred writings through centuries, and the ultimate settlement of the controversies by the "ipse dixit" of a numerical majority of the Council of Trent, in 1546, after the**



Reformation had forced the issue, is thus admitted: "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning, that is, from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history. The canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is the result of a development, of a process at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the Church, and retarded by certain obscurities and natural hesitations, and which did not reach its final term until the dogmatic definition of the Tridentine Council.... And this want of an organized distribution, secondarily to the absence of an early fixation of the Canon, left room for variations and doubts which lasted far into the centuries." (Catholic Encyclopedia. iii, 274.) The *modus operandi* of the Holy Council in ultimately "canonizing" Jerome's old Vulgate Version, and its motive for doing so, are thus exposed by the keen pen of the author of The Rise and Fall: "When the Council of Trent resolved to pronounce sentence on the Canon of Scripture, the opinion which prevailed, after some debate, was to declare the Latin Vulgate authentic and almost infallible; and this sentence, which was guarded by formidable anathemas, secured all the books of the Old and New Testament which composed that ancient version.... When the merit of that version was discussed, the majority of the theologians urged, with confidence and success, that it was absolutely necessary to receive the Vulgate as authentic and inspired, unless they wished to abandon the victory to the Lutherans, and the honors of the Church to the Grammarians." (Gibbon, A Vindication, v, 2; Istoria del Consiglio Tridentino, L. ii, p. 147.) A number of these books were bitterly disputed and their authenticity and inspiration denied by the leading Reformers, Luther, Grotius, Calvin, etc., and excluded from their official lists, until finally the Reformed Church followed the example of the Church hopeless of reform and swallowed the canon whole, as we have it today, minus, of course, the Tobit, Judith, and like inspired buffooneries of the True Bible" (Joseph Wheless, Forgery In Christianity, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 97-98).

"To argue and prove that the Four (Gospels) were regarded as "Apostolic" and hence "canonical" after the middle of the second century, argues and proves that until that late date they were not so regarded,— which we have seen is impossible if they had been written by Apostles a hundred years and more previously and authorized by them "for the purpose of being read in the Churches," as the very ground and pillar of their foundation and faith....Follow the proofs and argument of the Church to its own undoing: 'From the testimony of St. Irenaeus (A.D. 185) alone there can be no reasonable doubt that the Canon of the Gospel was inalterably fixed in the Catholic Church by the last quarter of the second century to the exclusion of any pretended Evangelists. [Sundry writings mentioned] presuppose the authority enjoyed by the Fourfold Gospel towards the middle of the second century.... Even Rationalistic scholars like Harnack admit the canonicity of the quadriform Gospel between the years 140-175.' (CE. iii, 275.) Even CE. does not prove or claim that it was any earlier; so here the Church and the Rationalists are in accord on this fatal fact! Certainly Popes Peter and Clement I, not to review the silent others, would have "inalterably fixed" the Divine Canonicity of the Four a century before, if they had known about these precious productions of the Apostles;—if, in fact, they had existed, the known works of Holy Apostles and apostolic men! But until "towards the middle of the second century" there was no "canon" or notion of divinely inspired Apostolic Gospels—simply for the reason that until just about that period they were not in existence....The sudden appearance at a certain late date, of a previously unknown document, which is then attributed to an earlier age and long since dead writers, is one of the surest earmarks of forgery" (Joseph Wheless, Forgery In Christianity, Alfred Knoph, New York, 1930, p. 184-185).

I could go on and on but you get the point I hope. We have been deceived as Christians and followers of "the Christ" by Roman anti-Semitism into believing a forgery of texts mixed with pure invention mixed in for good measure. We have not the truth concerning either the Jewish Messiah or "the Christ" in our New Testaments. We have in reality, as shown earlier in this website, a falsification of the earlier truths concerning "the Christ" as once held by the earliest Gnostic Christians who never believed in a history fleshly Christ. That explains why so many of our passages and stories in our New Testaments can be shown to be but "literalizations" of Ancient allegories of "the Christ" which are presented to us in the names of the Jerusalem "apostles" to gain authority for their acceptance. What is passed off to us as a literal history of "Jesus" and the Jewish Messiah is anything but that. Surely after these few quotes you should be moved to want to know more about the document you have accepted "by faith" and trusted for your Eternal Life when it appears that often it is untrustworthy. I call for your personal investigation as to the claims made by the New Testament and its call to be the religious authority for your life.



## GETTING STARTED...IT IS NOT AS HARD AS YOU THINK

I think it appropriate that we begin our investigation of this issue concerning the canonization of the New Testament by turning to The Light of Reason, volume one, a writing that appeared several years ago by Schmucl Golding, the editor of the Biblical Polemics newsletter. Golding's synopsis of the process by which the Bible was formed is not only accurate but succinct. On page 23 he says,

*"First the NT was not written by any of the disciples of Jesus nor by persons who even lived in that era . . . When the church fathers compiled the New Testament in the year 397, they collected all the writings they could find and managed them as they pleased. They decided by vote which of the books out of the collection they had made should be the word of God and which should not. They rejected several, they voted others to be doubtful, and those books which had a majority of votes were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people since calling themselves Christians would have believed otherwise. For the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other."*

It is important to note the key concept here is that the Bible was put together by a group of men who met, went through a collection of writings, and chose through voting those that are to be deemed divinely inspired. Many of them wound up on the cutting room floor. Golding continues,

*Who the people were that did all of this we know little of. They called themselves by the general name of church fathers and this is all the average Christian knows of the matter.... Disputes, however, ran high among the people calling themselves Christians not only as to points of doctrine but as to the authenticity of the books.*

Although not stated verbatim, the essence of Golding's next paragraph is that when disputes broke out the opposition was often either eliminated or ostracized. Then, he continues by saying,

*Constantine, an unbaptized pagan, convened the Council of Nicea in the year 325 in order to settle these disputes. A major issue was the nature of the deity they worshipped. Based upon their decisions Jesus was changed from a man to God in the flesh, the sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday, the Passover was changed to Easter . . . and the NT was canonized as a holy book.*

You may need to read that underlined passage above one more time for good measure.

**Answer for yourself:** Knowing the events just described, can you explain to yourself how the Holy Spirit could be leading the changing of the Eternal Sabbath to Sunday, or changing the Passover to the pagan holiday of Istar (Easter), or making a human man or the Jewish messiah who was always but a man anointed of God into a God, which is admitted by most to be scandalous and idolatrous?

**Answer for yourself:** Are we to believe that in spite of such blunders by the Holy Spirit that we find in the New Testament manuscripts where we find over 600,000 variations in a little over 6000 fragments where no two fragments or pieces recovered agree that yet He got right the selection of a group of books in the early 4th century which for all practical purposed replaced the Hebrew Scriptures for the early church as their Bible?

**Answer for yourself:** Did the Holy Spirit have a bad day or something? Surely you can see that such events were not led by the Holy Spirit at all...for God cannot and will not contradict His Word...man may change it....man can deny it....man can invent and add to it as you saw...but the jots and titles of the Hebrew Scriptures are forever! In spite of what is said by New Testament scholars that the New Testament and the Christian Bibles are faithful to the Masoretic text....it is not. [Read the references article and understand why the New Testament is not faithful to the Masoretic text when Christianity says it is.](#)

## THE CATHOLIC NEW TESTAMENT...THE WORK OF MEN OR GOD...WHO DO WE BLAME?

We have shown you earlier in this website through abundant proofs how the First New Testament given to us by Marcion taught the allegorical concept handed down by the Ancients of "the Christ" of God which lives within every man and woman and life's quest which is to awaken to this "Christ within us" and became aware of the indwelling Christ and not only yield to His direction but at the same time allow the Christ to make mediation for us with the Divine Creator. This truth is totally erased later by the proto-literalist Catholics like Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, who begin to teach the "literalization" of "the Christ" as a historical personage. The culmination of all of this is the falsification of many "gospels" and "epistles" in the names of long-dead Apostles and Paul to gain a false authority for such later doctrinal creations like the "historical fleshy Christ". We look to Irenaeus for the supreme invention when we find that it was he that provides the ultimate refutation of the earlier Gnostic Gospels and the First New Testament by Marcion by the presentation of his Second New Testament in roughly 180 C.E.

In the opinions shared above taken from the pens of many scholars then it was men, rather than God, who composed the New Testament which we have today. And for that reason our current New Testament is suspect "doctrinally" in many regards whether you knew it or not. Many Christians, especially Protestants, have great difficulty with any assertion to the effect that men and not God is responsible for the New Testament coming into existence. On page 6 in Answering Christianity's Most Puzzling Questions, volume one, apologist Richard Sisson states.

*"In fact, after the death of Jesus a whole flood of books that claimed to be inspired appeared.... [Disputes over which ones were true were so intense that the debate continued for centuries. Finally in the fourth century a group of church leaders called a council and took a vote. The 66 books that comprised our cherished Bible were declared to be Scripture by a vote of 568 to 563."*

Evidently not all approved of the selection of "books" that make up our New Testaments today as you can see. Sadly what was not approved and what found the cutting room floor were often the earlier books which the earliest Gnostic Christians held sacred which Rome will methodically eradicate along with the worlds' libraries in order to hid their "religious lies" that won by only 5 votes! Only in our generation have precious archeological discoveries brought to light the truth of "the Christ" as believed by the earliest Christians.

Historical evidence strongly implies that these "books" which were chosen by vote were not canonical but simply deemed as such by a group of highly influential religious and political figures. History states that men merely convened and determined which books were divinely inspired. The book was put together by a vote; it was not compiled by God and subsequently discovered to be God's work. The choices by the winners of this vote were motivated by their current "religious beliefs;" many of which can be shown to be in conflict with the Old Testament and the Bible that the Jewish nation used.

***IT IS TIME FOR AN HONEST LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT***





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## WHAT IS THE MASORETIC TEXT AND IS IT IN THE CHRISTIAN'S BIBLE?

**YES AND NO! This needs explanation.**

The term “Masoretic Text” is the name for the Hebrew text handed down from the Jews since the Babylonian captivity. The word “Masoretic” comes from “masor,” a Hebrew word meaning “traditional.” It means to hand down from person to person. The Masoretes handed down this text from generation to generation, guarded it and kept it well. There were families of Hebrew scholars in Babylon, in Palestine, and in Tiberius. According to most students of these matters, these Masoretes safeguarded the consonantal text of the Jewish Scriptures.

“The Masoretes flourished from about 500 to 1000 A.D. They were supposed to have standardized the Hebrew O.T. in about 600-700 A.D. by putting in the vowel pointings to aid in the pronunciation of the consonantal text. Their text is called the Masoretic Text or M.T. if you want to abbreviate it. Many assume that these Jewish Scriptures, as preserved by these Masoretes, are the “same” Jewish Scriptures contained in their Christian Bibles today. **Nothing could be further from the truth!**

## DOES THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE CONTAIN THE JEWISH MASORETIC TEXT....OR HAS IT BEEN ALTERED?

It would be a wonderful thing if in the Christian Bible we had a faithful replication of the Jewish Palestinian Masoretic text but we do not. Therefore the need for ministries like Bet Emet to bring this sad fact to your attention in hopes that your recognition of such a problem will lead to your own investigation into the matter to not only confirm what we have said, but also lead you in repentance of many false religious beliefs you hold as a traditional “Christian.”

In looking over the introductory notes of several of the Bibles I possess I was struck by the statements by several Bible committees guarantying that within their “translations” we have the Jewish Scriptures. One hardly ever approaches one's Christian Bible thinking it could be wrong and thus we, by default, are led astray.

If you open the beginnings of your Christian Bibles you often find in the preface to the Old Testament a commentary detailing how your Christian Old Testament was put together. Granted this is just a collection of summary statements but you can get the drift. Let me give you an example.

The Oxford Study Edition of The New English Bible with Apocrypha states on page xix: “the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts containing any parts of the Old Testament are among the Scrolls (commonly called the Dead Sea Scrolls) found in the caves of Qumran near the north-western end of the Dead Sea; they may be dated in the last two centuries B.C., though some may be a little earlier and others somewhat later.”

So far so good. But watch what they say later:

***“The text which they present is to a large extent identical with that in our Hebrew Bibles.”***

**THAT STATEMENT IS SIMPLY JUST NOT TRUE AND I CAN PROVE IT TO YOU  
IF YOU WILL LISTEN!**

## **WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU**

Most of you would read such a comment **“large extent identical with that in our Hebrew Bibles”** and be reassured that your Christian Old Testament is a faithful representation of the Old Testament in the Jewish Hebrew Bible.

**Answer for yourself:** What about those portions that do not fall within the above **“To a large extent”**? Do these portions make a major theological difference? Are these differences the reason why the Jews do not accept the Christian's Old Testament and much that is taught about Jesus by the Christian church and their texts?

**Answer for yourself:** What if I could show you that the above statement as representative of most Christian Old Testaments was a lie?

Over my dedicated fifteen plus years as a serious Bible researcher I have heard it all. **The only way to know the truth for yourself is to find it yourself.** I set out to do that and I have. And it is this truth I share with you. So many today have “holes” in their beliefs; holes when filled would alter their perspectives. But most study to a superficial level it seems and end up accepting and promoting the “party line” or “denominational position” for acceptability within the fraternity, or being preconditioned to a particular “belief” then when challenged they dismiss their opponents challenges.

What you just read above “that the Christian Old Testament in your Bibles is to a ***‘large extent identical’*** with the Hebrew Bible” is a lie spread by those of a particular religious position that produced that particular Bible. I have invested great time and finances to find out what the facts are concerning the changes and differences in the Jewish Hebrew Bible that are **“NOT** to a large extent” the same as the Christian Old Testament.

I have been humbled to say the least by my research and these comparisons and this led directly to not only a broken heart and rivers of tears as an ordained Pastor but ultimately to my resignation as a Christian Pastor. As my studies progressed during the eight years of my pastorate I came to a place finally where I could no longer continue the charade. I had to resign. Simply said, based on what I discovered the facts were as plain as the nose on my face; I had not been preaching the truth as taught by the Bible that the Jews like the Jesus of the New Testament used and read. Then why continue? I could not find a satisfactory answer that would bring me peace before God so I quit!

## **SO WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT IN MOST CHRISTIAN BIBLES?**

**There are basically two major problems with the Christian Old Testament: Doctrine and Prophecy.**

The Christian Old Testament is not a faithful representation of the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures in multiple places. Did I say multiple? How about hundreds?

Simply said, many DOCTRINES as recorded and taught about Jesus in the New Testament come directly from what is recorded in the Christian's Old Testament. **If these doctrines find their origin in a falsified and corrupted Old Testament which the Christian Bibles use (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures), then understand such doctrines in the New Testament are false! That means the quotes**



in the New Testament are wrong if the sources for them can be shown to be wrong! A simple comparison between the Christian's Old Testament, along with the Septuagint (the corrupted Greek translation of these Jewish Scriptures) against these Jewish Scriptures in the Jewish Tannah will convince even a blind man! You just need to know they exist and that your investigation into the matter will reveal it beyond any doubt.

What I am saying is that what are supposedly "fulfilled prophecies" from the Old Testament in our Christian Bibles, seen as quotes in the New Testament, are in reality quotes of forgeries and purposely misquoted and mistranslated passages in many places because the Christian's Old Testament come from texts which were altered and falsified in the Greek translation of them 200 years before the time of Jesus. Therefore the New Testament's reference to these as "fulfillments," upon examination with the real Jewish Masoretic text, can be shown to be gross falsifications and purposeful mistranslations in many instances. Understand I am not saying "all Messianic prophecy" is corrupted, but much is and you should know about it. There is a big difference when reading the Old Testament and believing what you are reading came from God or from men with a theological agenda. Many of these "doctrines" and "prophecies" were literally "created" by the Pythagorean-Greek Jews of Alexandria which they translated the Jewish Scriptures into Greek.

## THE TERRIBLE IRONY OF THIS

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever confused "Messianic prophecy" with "Sun-worship" and the prophecy concerning the coming of sun-god redeemers?

Before you say "no" you need to listen to this. These Pythagorean-Greek Jews of Alexandria (the Essenes) had long since separated from conservative Judaism. "Apostates" is a good word to use here. Study will reveal this to you. Just because Jews lived in Alexandria does not mean they were not Hellenized and had been influenced by the religious climate that existed in [Alexandria, Egypt](#).

These Greek-Jews (Essenes) of Alexandria were the translators of the Jewish Scriptures and were responsible for the Greek translation of the Old Testament which would later find its way into the Christian Bible. In other words, many religious teachings of these Pythagorean-Buddhist Essenes, as taken from Pythagorean and Buddhist religious beliefs, as well as Iranian sun-worship, were "added" into their Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures in order to enhance the religious authority of their sect. [This is a fact!](#) They made it look as if God had sanctioned them as "His people" instead of Israel! Besides that they altered what the Tanakh said concerning the "anointed one to come" and [patterned the Messiah after literalized sun-gods](#).

These Pythagorean-Buddhist Greek-Jews looked toward a cosmic sun-god incarnated man. This man will be "crucified" and killed in the heavens. These concepts were later personified as if this man was real. The stories and legends grew (<http://paganizingfaithofyeshua.net/firms.com>). The irony is that when Jesus was "crucified," this large group of Essene believers, in the turbulent Messianic confusion of the first century, looked to the "crucified Jesus" as the one they had been waiting for, but admittedly missed identifying him as such while he was alive. So, if you followed, these pagan beliefs as held by these Pythagorean-Buddhist Essenes, which originated from sun-worship, the same "pagan religious beliefs" which had been "added" to the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, were now applied to the Jesus of the New Testament after his crucifixion. Jesus became the "fulfillment" of them only because these Essenes identified him after he was crucified with their crucified theological heroes.

So what was never Messianic prophecy in the Greek translation and alteration of the Jewish Scriptures, now becomes "Messianic prophecy" to these Essenes in the first century. Religious concepts held by these Essenes which they applied to their

**incarnated sun-god redeemer Angel-Messiah were now applied to Jesus. These Essenes literally convert as a large group to the Jesus' movement in the first century and almost totally vanish. They become the first Christians. Now within the synagogues in the latter part of the first century and later we have two Messianic beliefs jockeying for mastery: one Davidic, and one Cosmic; one from the Tanakh and one from a synthesis of Pythagorean-Indian-Buddhist belief which trace their origin to astrology and sun-worship and which were recorded in a falsified translation of the Jewish Scriptures by prior Essenes in Alexandria in order to bolster the authority of their sect by promoting the sect and their religious views as if given by God in the Bible. No wonder the Jews down through history, as well as today, don't accept much what is taught by the Christian church about Jesus and the Messiah; their Bibles never had such stuff in it!**

The problem for the Christian is that the Tanakh never said such things about the Davidic Messiah. Many of these concepts as held by these Essenes which were applied by them from the corrupted Greek Old Testament to Jesus, their acclaimed Angel-Messiah, never could be found in the Jewish Tanakh. **Their beliefs about Messiah were not to be found in the Tanakh, but only in their own writings to which they exalted above the writings of Moses and the prophets.**

The same passages that these Essenes yielded to in the Greek Old Testament for their beliefs concerning their godman, when examined in the Jewish Scriptures and rightly understood and interpreted by conservative Rabbis, never were intended to be of a Messianic nature in the first place.

**Answer for yourself:** Do you want to believe the truth about Jesus and the Messiah, or will fantasy and pagan beliefs, long ago added to the Word of God and undetected by most today, suffice for your religious beliefs as far as your concerned?

Tragically, we read these "added" religious doctrines in our Christian Old Testament, and read the "quotes in the New Testament as taken from the same source" as if given by God. We read them as if this were the truth about the Messiah and Jesus. We never had a reason to doubt our Christian Old Testament or its quotes in the New Testament. Just a cursory reading of these documents will not reveal what I have said in this article to hardly anyone. Only serious study and comparative study of the documents will do this. We choose to believe like "good and faithful" Christians and like sheep we were led astray and never knew it. And we never knew, that is up till now! God knows we have believed a lie even if we don't, and I thank Him that is love is not contingent on us being "right." But if we can learn the truth and alter our worship whereby we remove ourselves, based on what we learn, from idolatry, then our love for God should demand we study to find the truth and not die as idolators.

The Christian Old Testaments might read as if came from God, because most of it did, and the New Testament's quotes of these falsified passages might seem reassuring, but if you took the time to compare these problem passages with the Jewish Bibles today you would see for yourself the prophets never said such things as recorded in many places in the Christian Old Testaments. Besides that, the quotes in the New Testament, when taken from these problem passages, are completely wrong and misleading as well.

**There exists today the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Old Testament and they are not the same in very important places affecting both doctrines and prophecies.** As a Christian you will never know that until someone first tells you and then you go look for yourself to see if this be true. When I was confronted with such information I, as a Pastor, had to know. What if I had been wrong? What if I had the wrong book? What if 2000 years ago things were changed and I don't know it and believe what I have been told and taught by others who don't know as well?



As stated above, but its importance requires its restatement. Many quotes from this altered Christian Old Testament were again included in the New Testament and you read them as if they are again true and given by God. All you are reading are the accepted traditions of those who came before you who either never knew how to read Hebrew, knew of this deception or willfully added to it.

The New English Bible goes on to say:

“In the second century A.D. or even earlier the Rabbis, the Jewish religious leaders, compiled a text from such manuscripts as had survived the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and on this basis was established the traditional or Massoretic text, so called from the Hebrew word “massorah” or “tradition”. The earliest surviving manuscripts of this text date from the ninth to eleventh centuries A.D.; and it is this text, as printed in R. Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (3rd edition, 1937), which has been used for the present translation”.

Let me tell you what you just read....Another lie!

The text in the Oxford's New English Bible, like all Christian Old Testaments, is NOT the text that is used, or has been used, by the Jewish Rabbis and people since long before Jesus! That's right. The text you are reading is the one handed down by the Alexandrian translators which forged many of their sects Pythagorean-Buddhist and Essene doctrines into their translations. You are reading the evolution of their Greek translation and not the Hebrew Masoretic text in all instances. In the majority of the passages we find agreement between the Greek and the Hebrew, and any differences are minor to say the least. Yet, it not these passages that trouble us, but the one which make for theological and doctrinal diversity.

This is the purpose of the Web Site and the many articles listed; to reveal this problem to all those who show interest. On this site I have provided for you what I believe to be overwhelming evidence to not only the falsification and purposeful mistranslation of the Jewish Scriptures, but hundreds of examples of these divergent doctrines and religious beliefs which influenced many in the early years of the early church. Some never deterred from the faith of Jesus; but many did. Many were influenced by this Greek adulteration of the Jewish Bible, and forthcoming were doctrines taken from this Greek text along with variant readings which ended up in your Christian Bibles. We go to church and "hear" these falsehoods taught and "amended" but never take the time to compare. I have don't that for you. The evidence is not pretty, but repentance is. With every lie exposed, with every false doctrine crushed, and with every step toward truth and obedience, then God is closer.

Not only did you not know of these things before now, but those who published this Oxford Bible did not know as well; at least hopefully for it would be a terrible thing to think that such deception was done on purpose. To list all the Christian Bibles which have fallen to this same deceptions would take forever.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

"What about the Hebrew text used by the KJV translators? Here is some background on it. The Daniel Bomberg edition, 1516-17, was called the "First Rabbinic Bible." That's a joke. This text, in many places, was derived from the Septuagint instead of the Palestinian Masoretic text, which I will show you in the following pages on this web site, is but an altered and poorly constructed falsification of the Jewish Scriptures in many places. Again, I must be fair. Much confirms the Jewish Masoretic text, but there are instances where it does not and these are theological and doctrinal problems for the Christian if he only knew.

Then in 1524-25, Bomberg published a second edition edited by Abraham Ben Chayyim (or Ben Hayyim) iben Adonijah. This is called the Ben Chayyim edition of the Hebrew text. Daniel Bomberg's edition, on which the KJV is based, was the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text. This was called the Second Great Rabbinic Bible. This became the standard Masoretic text for the next 400 years. All along you need to understand this is a fraudulent

text and now the people, uneducated, never knew. Sounds a lot like today. They accepted what they had been handed just like you and me. Bomberg never knew himself for the adulteration of the Jewish Scriptures into Greek was clouded in embellished legends (the letter of Aristeas) which had grown around the importance and divine creation of the Greek translation which scholars today recognize as lies told to increase the importance and acceptance of this falsified text by the Gentiles as against the Jewish Bible. You need to realize when one begins with a misrepresented text, and when quotes are taken from these falsified, perverted, twisted, and adulterated passages, then the quotes are just as wrong as its parent document!

"The Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text was used even in the first two editions of Biblia Hebraica by Rudolf Kittel. The dates on those first two editions were 1906 and 1912. He used the same Hebrew text as the KJV translators (it is already corrupted). Now the KJV has this same falsified and corrupted Old Testament as the Septuagint and few know today; except the Rabbis who both know and read Hebrew.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever wondered why the Rabbis don't use the Christian Bible's Old Testament? Could it be that they know it is theologically mutant in many places? Why not use it if it is accurate?

## SO WHY HAS CHRISTIANS REJECTED THE JEWISH BIBLE JESUS USED? IS "OLDEST" REALLY THE "BEST"?

Today, the reason that most of the Hebrew departments, in colleges, universities, and seminaries who teach Hebrew, use Septuagint and Christian Old Testaments instead of the Palestinian Masoretic text is the same reason they use the critical Greek text in the N.T. They believe the "oldest" texts, either in Hebrew or in Greek, must always be the best. Not necessarily. Since no copies of the Masoretic text could be found till the 9th century A.D. these "differences" of what I spoke were assumed to be nothing more than a Jewish reaction to Christianity. Christian writers and scholars of their day assumed that the variant readings were because the Jewish Rabbis removed the "prophecies" in reaction to Christianity and Jesus. Without sufficient knowledge and on the surface this makes all the sense. We have two Old Testaments. One is made to be a constant prophecy about the Messiah or Jesus. The other is not. The Greek manuscripts of the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures were older than any existing Jewish Masoretic texts by a thousand years, and following the rule "oldest is best" preference was given by most to the Greek translation over the Hebrew Masoretic text. Not all agreed however. I find it rather startling that Clement of Rome, the first Bishop of Rome, referenced in all his writings the Jewish Masoretic Palestinian text and never quoted from the Greek. Check me out and see if I am right. The first Church father beyond Paul did not use the Greek Scriptures and he was the Bishop of Rome.

**Answer for yourself:** What did he know that we don't? Could he possibly have known that the Greek translation had been perverted and misrepresented the Messiah so badly that he could not use it?

So, logically following the "oldest is best" rule the Christians paid little attention the the Jewish Bible and their Jewish texts which were definitely "not Christianized (in the form of promotion of the Essene Angel-Messiah)." What you need to understand is that even though these Greek translations might be the oldest, they were doctored by Essene heretics and therefore are not the "best" regardless that they are the oldest. Oldest never means most accurate or truthful.

**Answer for yourself:** But how can we know for sure? How can we know the Rabbis' Old Testaments today are true and the Christian Old Testament falsified? Until the last 50 years it has been one camp vs the other camp; opinion vs opinion. Nothing was settled.

## THE ROCKS CRY OUT

Then God did something wonderful.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls came evidence to the existence of this Jewish Masoretic text just as



old or older than the Septuagint (Greek translations of the Old Testament). The identical similarity of a texts separated by over a thousand years was infinitesimal. The accuracy was astonishing and almost beyond belief. No longer could Christians say the Jews changed their Old Testaments after Jesus as a sour-grapes reaction to Christianity! Since the discovery of the manuscripts at Qumran we now have copies of the same texts reading identical which are separated by more than one thousand years. This exactness in the comparison of the 900 A.D. texts with the 200 B.C.E. texts has convinced textual scholars, both Jews and Christians, that such uniformness can be applied safely to all of the Masoretic texts. It must not be forgotten that we now have in our possession Masoretic texts as old or order than the Septuagint which contradict and correct the deviant readings which were added to the Greek mistranslation of the Hebrew texts by the Alexandrian Greek-Jews and Essenes. We now know the Septuagint is the errant text and one needs to begin to examine the origin of this translation in order to come to an understanding who it was that was behind the translation, and the existing religious beliefs of the sect that translated it, and their reasons for doing so.

The discovery at Qumran revealed that the Masoretic text we have today as preserved and used by Rabbis all over the world, is the same Masoretic text unaltered for the most part that existed long before the time of Jesus. **It is this Masoretic text which should have been used in all readings of the Christian's Old Testament and it was not!** And again let us not forget that this Jewish Masoretic text, as found at Qumran, differs considerably with the Greek translations found there also. If this more accurate Masoretic text had been used for the Christian's Old Testament instead of the corrupted Essene one, then the lies told about Jesus in the New Testament would not have existed, or at least been promulgated as if were Divine fiat.

What should concern you now is whether you want to read the real Word of God before you die or not. What should concern you is that you have a choice before you: you can obtain an "accurate" translation of the Jewish Scriptures in English by accepting the Jewish Tanakh, or you can continue to read your contemporary Christian Old Testament and its fables concerning a godman Angel-Messiah. A "translation" is what you were expecting when you bought your Christian Bible; you got a purposeful mistranslation in many places, and not possessing the knowledge, you are forced to read it not discerning the meat from the bones.

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you want a faithful translation? If it could be proven to you that the Greek translation was falsified over two thousand years ago would you not want to know? If it could be shown that those who did this translation were not the Rabbis as attested by legend as you have been told... would you want to know? Do you want to get behind the legends and get the facts and the truth?

## DID JESUS LEAVE US ANY CLUES?

Not only was the Jewish Scripture preserved by the Jews in Palestine, but it was authorized by Jesus. Understand that in Jesus' day the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures existed and had for almost two hundred years. It can be shown that Jesus authorized the traditional Masoretic Hebrew O.T. text and not the Greek translation of these Jewish Scriptures:

**Matt 4:4**

***4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.***

**Matt 5:17-18**

***17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.***

**18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (referencing the Hebrew text and not the Greek).**

## Luke 24:44

*44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

Jesus never refuted any text, any word, or any letter in the Hebrew O.T. He didn't say, "Now Moses was misquoted here, it should have been this..." Jesus never said: "We need to get the Greek translation because the Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew have been altered and I have been taken out of them." He never said: "The doctrines as taught in the Hebrew texts have passed away and the newer ones in the Greek is what God really intended to say." **THINK!**

He offered no textual criticism whatever. Had there been any changes, I'm sure he would have at least mentioned it somewhere in his teaching and preaching or at least corrected it if it had been in error. If he had then we would have some record of it, but in all that is recorded of his life and his sayings there is not one instance of him ever correcting "the text" or telling us that the existing Greek translation is the true Word of God and should be heeded over the Palestinian Masoretic text. Jesus was quick to correct sin and error in behavior of the people, and the source for his authority and truth which was the standard for all mankind's conduct was the Hebrew texts. It would seem that if such beliefs and dogmas in the Hebrew Masoretic text had been wrong and different ones and changes in the Greek translation had been right, then Jesus would have been a hypocrite to teach from and correct others from a Hebrew Masoretic text which was not authoritative or Divine. Jesus, if from God, would have been obligated to teach from the new improved Greek Bible. He did not!

**Jesus never alluded to the Greek Bible once, but always referred to the Jewish Masoretic text as it existed in his day!** Understand the Greek texts and translation of the Jewish Scriptures existed in his day and this Greek Bible had 4 divisions and not 3 like the Jewish Bible. Again, he tells us in Luke 24:44 that it is the: 1) Law of Moses, 2) prophets, and 3) psalms where all is to be fulfilled. (3 divisions and not 4). Jesus alludes directly to the Jewish Bible and not the Greek Bible.

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you think Jesus knew of the alterations and corruptions of the Greek translation and could this be the reason both he and the Jewish religious leaders in Palestine refused to use it?

Jesus' stamp of approval is on the Masoretic Hebrew text, and yours needs to be as well.

Shalom.





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## THE MURATORIAN CANON...THE UNSETTLED NEW TESTAMENT CONTINUES

The canon of Muratori is also called the Muratorian Fragment, after the name of the discoverer and first editor, L.A. Muratori (in the "Antiquitates italicæ", III, Milan, 1740, 851 sq.), the oldest known canon or list of books of the New Testament. The manuscript containing the canon originally belonged to Bobbio and is now in the Bibliotheca Ambrosiana at Milan (Cod. J 101 sup.). Written in the eighth century, it plainly shows the uncultured Latin of that time. The fragment is of the highest importance for the history of the Biblical canon. **It was written in Rome itself or in its environs about 200; A.D.** and probably the original was in Greek, from which it was translated into Latin. This Latin text is preserved solely in the manuscript of the Ambrosiana. A few sentences of the Muratorian Canon are preserved in some other manuscripts, especially in codices of St. Paul's Epistles in Monte Cassino. The canon consists of no mere list of the Scriptures, but of a survey, which supplies at the same time historical and other information regarding each book. The beginning is missing; the preserved text begins with the last line concerning the second Gospel and the notices, preserved entire, concerning the third and fourth Gospels. Then there are mentioned: The Acts, St. Paul's Epistles (including those to Philemon, Titus and Timothy; the spurious ones to the Laodiceans and Alexandrians are rejected); furthermore, the Epistle of St. Jude and two Epistles of St. John; among the Scriptures which "in catholica habentur", are cited the "Sapientia ab amicis Salomonis in honorem ipsius scripta", as well as the Apocalypses of St. John and St. Peter, but with **the remark that some will not allow the latter to be read in the church.** Then mention is made of the Pastor of Hermas, which may be read anywhere but not in the divine service; and, finally, there are rejected false Scriptures, which were used by heretics. In consequence of the barbarous Latin there is no complete understanding of the correct meaning of some of the sentences.

**As stated above, the date of this canon is entirely unknown, but orthodoxy places it at the time of Irenaeus (200 A.D.),** again simply it recognized the Four Gospels, Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, First John, Second John, Jude, and Revelation. It mentions the Wisdom of Solomon which is no longer in the Bible, among the New Testament books; speak approvingly of the Shepherd of Hermas, and says that the Revelation of John and the Revelation of Peter were accepted by the writer, although many were unwilling at the Revelation of Peter should be read in the churches. It does not mention either First Peter, Second Peter, First John, or James (Westcott, On The Canon of the New Testament, p. 527), all of which are not in the Bible.

As to the author, many conjectures were made (Papias, Hegesippus, Caius of Rome, Hippolytus of Rome, Rhodon, Melito of Sardis were proposed); but no well founded hypothesis has been adduced up to the present. It speaks of the Epistle to the Laodiceans, calls the Epistle to the Hebrews the Epistle to the Alexandrians (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 225), and says both were **forgeries**, passing under the name of Paul—a fact of which modern theologians are discretely silent, when they cite, as they do with so much exultation, this manuscript as "early evidence of the canon." You can judge for yourself how desperately the church was in need of support when, after a tremendous conflict, it is willing to accept as "early evidence" a manuscript whose date is at least **one hundred an fifty to two hundred years after the time of Jesus' death..**

**These facts are disconcerting if you ponder them. We are 170 years removed from the Great Commission supposedly issued by Jesus. We find that almost 200 years later we have not the**

**finished book that one would think necessary for such a noble endeavor as the Great Commission. I challenge you to imagine for a moment Jesus commanding his Apostles to go into all the world with this "New Testament" message of salvation but ill equipped due to not having the manual yet ready.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is Jesus responsible for those people going to hell since he did not have the book ready for his followers in time? What of those that perished without accepting the necessary messages of these books which we deem divine today which teach that there is no salvation without accepting Jesus?

I can just hear Jesus saying:

***Matt 28:18-20 18 ..."All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ...but look guys...I don't have the new Bible ....the New Testament ready yet.... the Father and I will not be able to agree on what to give you guys as the new manual for salvation for well over 200 years yet."***

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever stopped to think that Jesus was incompetent for his role if he expected his followers to go without the proper message or the necessary books for salvation for almost 200 years or more? The picture gets even more bizarre when you think it possible that Jesus and God would allow the selection of this new Bible be settled later at the Council of Trent in 1563 by [only 5 votes \(568-563\) and that only 5 votes decided what is "Divine" and what is "not Divine"?](#)

**Answer for yourself:** Could not the Holy Spirit speak to these other 563 concerning which books He wanted in His new replacement Bible that has a different salvation message than the earlier one the Jewish Rabbis and Jewish Nation had used since Moses? What if 6 people on the "winning side" had been sick that day...what books would have been in our New Testament today which are not? Would these other books which were rejected have been a more authentic Christianity than what we have received today? Were 6 people absent that day and we not know?

**Answer for yourself:** How were these disciples and Apostles to teach the nations, better yet what were they to teach if they could not agree on what to teach with so many conflicting Gospels and Epistles circulating in the first centuries of the Gentile Church? Did the "winning side" represent the most authentic Christianity of the early Jewish church or did they not? Did the winning side represent the earliest "allegorical Gnostic Christians" or the later "proto-literalistic Catholics"? Let me give you a hint...they rejected the early Gnostic Christians books and their earliest teachings on "the Christ".

**Answer for yourself:** Were the people who lives during these 200 years who were deprived of these books "voted" books "damned" without hope automatically because they did not have the "orthodox" New Testament in their day? What if they had believed in the books that were rejected? Were they damned because the books that they had been taught to accept were now discarded by 5 votes out of a 1000? Were their faiths worthless?

**Answer for yourself:** Is this inability to decide upon what was "inspired" by the early church the work of the Holy Spirit, and if so, what does that do to our image and understanding of a perfect God who cannot make up His mind and speak to his people? Is one's salvation hanging in the balance due to 5 people and a vote of 568-563?

Hopefully your reason and intellect is such that you can see the folly of such inability to decide which books which supposedly God had determined necessary for the salvation of the world. **The investigation of the sequence of books being deemed "in" and "out" and "in" and "out" over and over during the following centuries does little to bolster the image of a God who leads a people let alone speaks to them.**



*John 16:13 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Well the Holy Spirit is evidently not guiding very good for several centuries. If you take the above passage from the New Testament seriously then God is out of His mind because He is evidently speaking one thing to one group at one time and a completely different and contradicting thing to another group at another time; even at the same times. We call that schizophrenia today and prescribe mind-altering drugs to cure such conditions. God needs a pill!

## A MUCH MORE SERIOUS QUESTION AWAITS YOUR CONTEMPLATION

Preserving the honor of God hopefully the Holy Spirit had little to do with this confusion in the canonization of the New Testament. What should trouble you is the inclusion into this "New Testament" of the various sects conflicting and competing theologies which today, not knowing the origin or the identity of them, one is relegated to reading the New Testament under the false notion that all is "inspired" and accepting such "beliefs" as if they came from God. Let me give you a parallel. You go to the store and buy four puzzles consisting of a thousand pieces. You quickly go home and empty the pieces together into one jumble and then begin to fit and force them into a frame that was meant to only handle one puzzle. You read the instructions on the box and they inform you that these pieces are "inspired" so with utter confidence you begin to force the pieces together and make them fit even when they won't. Needless to say the picture comes out distorted and is not true to the original. This is what has happened by the continual jockeying for authority by sect after sect over hundreds of years as they got "their views and ideas" recognized as the Word of God through successive Catholic Church Councils. History teaches us that often murder determined who would win these later "votes" on what books were "in" and "out". *Sounds like God to me! These "conflicting theological ideas" became literally Holy Scripture for you and me and we find them in our New Testaments!* You failure to be taught the truth concerning your New Testament and not knowing and understanding the truth and history of the Canonization of the New Testament and the selection of books by sect after sect has robbed you of the truth in understanding what validity and authority such a document might possess today. In place of "truth" we got Church Tradition! By the way it is the "winners" who make such "church tradition". To stake your Eternal Life upon such a "power struggle" for supremacy by those fractions within the Gentile Church is not wise; especially in light of the knowledge you are now acquiring. I call upon you to make an honest comparison of the teachings of the Jewish Bible vs. The New Testament. You might have never noticed by the New Testament contradicts the Eternal Word of God as found in the Jewish Tanakh in multiple and numerous places; literally hundreds of passages in our Greek Old Testament which later become "quotes" in our New Testament are outright forgeries and pure inventions. Literalized sunworship passes for orthodoxy today and we don't know it because we never took the time to compare line upon line and precept upon precept from our Christian Bibles with the Hebrew Scriptures. Had we done this in "key" doctrinal places (atonement, messianism, prophecy, etc.) we would have seen these glaring departures from the Holy Hebrew Scriptures and would then be well equipped to approach the Christian Old Testaments and our New Testaments we have today and see the folly of the canonization of these books of theological deviation for what they truly are.

Dear one, this means that the "jots" and "titles" that Jesus said were "forever" were nullified in many places in the New Testament. Your lack of awareness does not negate such; only study on your part will reveal this to you. We at Bet Emet Ministries sound the alarm; it is time to recognize for yourself the deception to which we have fallen due to 5 votes which determined what our religious belief system was to be. It is time to ruthlessly investigate the early church to see just what was the "religious belief system" of that day as it pertained to the non-Jew and see if we have been taught the truth or error. It is time we get a "kodak moment" of the early church and the texts they used for their Scriptures and make them ours today since it is demonstrable that we don't have the religious texts nor the religious doctrines which originally went into all the world with the

**Jerusalem church and James' decree in Acts 15 and Acts 16. We are grafted into the Israel of God but possess a completely different Bible and religious belief system and that should not be! Bet Emet Ministries stands ready to enlighten the serious student to these errors in hopes that repentance brings your closer not only to the truth of the matter but a closer walk with the Creator.**





# A HONEST LOOK INTO THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...BY WHOM AND WHERE?

## MORE QUESTIONS:

- **Who first affirmed the books of the New Testament to be "inspired?"**
- **Why were they so affirmed?**
- **What was the intellectual character of the affirmants?**
- **Who, as far as is known, compiled them into the volume we now have called the New Testament?**
- **What books are now included in the New Testament which in earlier days were excluded?**
- **What books are now excluded which were then in earlier days included?**
- **What councils of the church voted on the canonical list?**
- **What books did they "vote in" and "vote out?"**
- **Where did the theory begin that one must believe the New Testament or be damned?**

## WHAT IS MY PURPOSE IN SHARING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION?

In inviting the reader to share the inquiry, I wish to assure him that I have no theory to advocate. In opposing what I believe to be error, I desire simply to offer the evidence which is easily accessible to most, which seems not to have had its due prominence in theological discussion among the masses, and which, if properly appreciated, must result in great changes in religious beliefs.

## THE MAIN SOURCES OF ANTIQUITY.....LISTENING AND LEARNING FROM THEM

The writings of the Christian Fathers, the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (the oldest Christian history now extant) and the modern works, On The Canon of the New Testament, by Brooke Foss Westcott, D.D., and The Canon of the Bible, by Prof. Samuel Davidson, D.D., are the main sources from which the information in these articles are chiefly drawn. But we are not limited by these as the sources are in reality almost endless if one chooses to look the the problem of the New Testament. The inexperienced person has little idea of the difficulty which the critical party finds in getting its facts before the public; nor of the systematic suppression used by the Christian media and clergy to prevent unpleasant truths concerning the Christian religion from coming out. There is not an orthodox Christian media source I know of that will publish the facts concerning the origin of the New Testament which are given in these articles. Men who know the Christian theology to be untrue, have to get their audience as best they can. Thus the importance of the Internet for our world today.

One would suppose that the Christian clergy would be familiar with the history of the New Testament and how it came to be compiled (the canonization of the New Testament), the truth is, it is one of the subjects least understood. For our purposes, by "canon" is meant the list of the books composing the New Testament. Among the early Christians it meant the list of the books appointed to be read in the churches, and later, it came to mean the list of books which were sources and test of doctrine.

## ORIGIN OF THE BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...BY WHOM AND WHEN?

The reader must bear in mind that most of the books in the New Testament are anonymous. Despite the names appearing at the beginning of your Gospels in the New Testament or over the epistles no one knows who wrote them, or at least most of them, and no one knows when they were written. As to their origin there have been conjectures, but the number of authors named is about equal to the number of commentators engaged in the guessing.

This might come as a shock to you but the books of the New Testament which have no known authors are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, the Epistle of James, Second Peter, Second John, Third John, Jude, and perhaps Revelation. The genuineness of Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians is doubted by some scholars, though the majority accept them as from Paul. **But this leaves ten of Paul's Epistles and the First of Peter, the First of John, and it may be Revelation as the only genuine writings in the New Testament!**

Prof. Davidson says that the Gospel of Matthew, as we have it now, could not have been written by Matthew (Intro. New Test., i. 484). In his book he goes on to explain why the present Gospel of Mark was not written by Mark, and that its author is unknown (Ibid., ii. 83-84). He also makes a strong case that Luke did not write the Gospel now bearing his name (Ibid., ii. 25). Of the Gospel of John he says:

"Its existence before 140 A.D. is incapable either of decisive or probable showing....The Johannine authorship has receded before the tide of modern criticism; and though this tide is arbitrary at times, it is here irresistible" (Canon, 127).

"No certain trace of existence of the Fourth Gospel can be found till after Justin Martyr, ie., till after the middle of the second century" (Intro. New Test., ii. 520).

Of course, if it were not written till 140 or 150 A.D., the Apostle John could not have been its author, for he was dead long before that.

Again, Prof. Davidson says:

"If it be asked whether all the New Testament writings proceeded from the authors whose names they bear, criticism can not reply in the affirmative" (Canon, 153).

"Textual criticism has been employed to discredit the true dates of the present Gospels (i.e., to make them earlier than they really were), and the most exaggerated descriptions have been given of the frequent transcriptions of the text and its great corruption in the second century (i.e., the believers say the evidence of the late dates are corruptions of the second century)...But the evidence in favor of the authors traditionally assigned to the Gospels and some of the Epistles, is still uncertain. A wide gap intervenes between eye-witnesses of the apostles or apostolic men that wrote the sacred books, and the earliest Fathers who assert such authorship. The traditional bridge between them is a precarious one" (Canon, 159).

The Epistles to Titus, and the First and Second Epistles to Timothy, commonly known as the "Pastoral Epistles," were not written by Paul (Davidson, Canon, 239, 252, 261; Intro. New Test., ii. 193-194). What is of major importance for the reader to understand is that prior to the year 170 A.D., nothing was heard of the



Second Epistle of Peter (Westcott, Canon, 227), and it was not generally known till the close of the third century (Ibid., 242). Dr. Westcott says that its canonicity can not even now, on historical grounds, be pronounced certainly authentic, and the most he can say for it is that it is better supported than the Shepherd of Hermas or the Epistle of Barnabas (Westcott, Canon, 227), of which we now hear nothing.

There has never been a time when the book of Revelation was not discarded by many persons competent to judge. The churches to which it was addressed, those in Asia, are the very ones which rejected it! It was not in the Bibles of the Eastern Christians for more than one thousand five hundred years, and was incorporated into those Bibles less than three centuries ago. Dionysius said that many of the early Christians denounced it as being without sense or reason, and as the forgery of Cerinthus (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., vii. 25). Dionysius himself did not believe it was written by John the Apostle (Ibid.), he did not know who did write it, although in another place he intimates that Cerinthus did so, and forged John's name to it (Ibid., iii. 28). Papias suggested that it might have been written by John the presbyter (Ibid., iii. 39). Caius said it was written by Cerinthus (Ibid., iii. 28). So great was the hostility and contempt for it in the East, that there is reason to believe that the bishops would not allow it to be read in the churches (Westcott, Canon, 442, note 2). In the synod of Toledo, a Western church, in 671 A.D., a special decree had to be passed affirming its authority (Ibid., 447, note 4). And so late as the sixteenth century, Beza, the friend of Luther and Calvin, conjectured that it was written by Mark (Prov. Apocalypsis).

Even yet, the Pauline authority of the Epistle of Hebrews, and its right to a place in the New Testament, have been denied by orthodox theologians. The genuine letters have the superscription, "Paul, called to be an Apostle," etc. This Epistle has none. Originally, no one claimed it to have been written by Paul. Tertullian, (202 A.D.), the Christian Father, said it was written by Barnabas (De dic. 20). In the Clermont manuscript it is to this day called the Epistle of Barnabas (Westcott, Canon, 263). The Old Latin version does not contain it (Ibid., 254). It was added subsequently, and then as an anonymous production (Ibid.). The early Latin Fathers, with entire unanimity, ignore it, and exclude it from the Bible. According to Origin some said it was written by Clement of Rome, others by Luke. Origin himself said, "But who it was that really wrote this epistle, God only knows" (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., vi. 23). Philastrius, of Brescia (387 A.D.), rejected it, saying that in some churches it was not read, and that its authorship was variously attributed to Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Luke and Paul (Haer. lxxxix). Grotius, in the seventeenth century, said it was obviously not written by Paul, and he believed it was written by Luke (Pref. To Hebrews). He also believed that the original title of the Second Epistle of Peter was the "Epistle of Simeon," James' successor as Bishop of Jerusalem (Pref. To 2 Peter). He also believed that the present Epistle was not the original one, but was compiled from two others by Simeon, of which the second begins as the third chapter. Dr. Westcott says that the Epistle to the Hebrews can not be shown to have been written by Paul (Westcott, Canon, 356). Kitto's Cyclopedia of the Bible says that its Pauline authorship, and its canonicity are assumptions, neither of which is admitted on all hands to have conclusive evidence (Art. "Hebrews, Epistle to the"). **And yet, in the face of facts like these, certain Christian teachers have told us that we must believe these books, or be damned eternally in a like of literal fire!** That is what unbelievers are opposing. They are not trying to tear down public morality. They are protesting against the elevation of stupidity as intelligence!

## HOW DID WE EVER LEARN THESE THINGS?...THROUGH HISTORICAL CRITICISM...

When the assertion is made that it has been proved that Matthew did not write the Gospel bearing his name, and that a particular book was not written by the person to whom it is usually attributed, the question is asked, "How does scholarship learn these things?" It is by what is known as the "historical method" of criticism. In case of a literary forgery, it is often easy to show that the work was not written by the person claimed as its author, while at the same time it would be utterly impossible to show who did write it. A few evidence that the Gospel of John was not written by the Apostle, will illustrate how the method is used.

1. The book does not claim to have been written by John. It is called the Gospel "according" to John.
2. It was not heard of till about the year 180 A.D., nearly a hundred years after John was dead. No one of the

Christian writers previous to that date makes the slightest mention of it. The inference is that it was not yet in existence.

3. It came into use first among the heretics, who did not ascribe it to John. It was not until toward the close of the second century that the book was attributed to him and then by the Fathers of the church (Davidson, Intro. New Test., ii. 520).
4. The Gospel of John says that Bethsaida was in Galilee (John 12:21). There is no such town in that district, and there never was. Bethsaida was on the east side of the sea of Tiberius, whereas Galilee was on the west side. St. John was born at Bethsaida, and the probability is that he would know the geographical location of his own birth-place.
5. John was the son of Zebedee (Matt. 10:2), and a Jew. But the author of the Gospel speaks of the Jews in the second and third persons. He says the "feasts of the Jews" (John 5:1), "the Passover, a feast of the Jews" (John 6:4), "the manner of the purifying of the Jews" (John 2:6), the law of the Jews is called "your law" (John 7:19; 10:34), "their law" (John 15:25), and he calls the Jews the children of the devil (John 8:44).
6. The other Evangelists narrate certain miracles, and say that John was the only one of the four Gospel writers who was an eyewitness; yet John does not mention them. The raising of Jarius' daughter is an illustration. This was a most astounding feat, enough to have stunned the observer and fixed him with amazement for a lifetime; and one would suppose that every well-authenticated case would have been carefully preserved by those who saw it. Matthew and Mark and Luke all narrate it. Mark and Luke distinctly assert that of the four Evangelists John was the only one present; but the Gospel of John makes not the slightest reference to it. The transfiguration is another. It is the only event of the kind that has ever occurred, and therefore the men who witnessed it ought certainly to have said something of it. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who were not present, describe it. Each asserts in the plainest terms that, of the four Gospel writers, John was the only one who saw it. Yet John does not even hint at it!

These are a few of the evidence that John did not write the Gospel now bearing his name, and they give an idea of how scholars determine the fact that a work is a forgery.

## THE TESTIMONY OF ANTIQUITY...SILENCE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS SOMETIMES

The reader has heard so much from orthodox sources, of the "unanimous testimony of antiquity to the authenticity of the Gospels," that he will be interested in knowing what that testimony is.

The first Christian writer whose works have come to us is Paul, and his Epistles we have in the New Testament. He makes no mention of the Four Gospels, makes no quotations from them, and makes not the slightest reference to them. The First Epistle of Peter, the First of John, which are generally believed to be genuine, and the Revelation of John, whose authenticity is conceded by many unbelievers, do not mention the Gospels, and do not quote from them. Likewise we have the book of Acts, Second John, Third John, James, and Jude, but none of them mentions the Four Gospels, or quotes from them, or gives the slightest indication that its author ever heard of them.

The Apostolic Fathers are they who immediately succeeded the Apostles, and the first of them was Clement of Rome (97 A.D.). We have his Epistle to the Corinthians, but in them there is no mention of either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. After him comes Ignatius (115 A.D.), from whom we have four epistles, believed to be genuine. Neither of them makes the least mention of the Four Gospels. Polycarp (116 A.D.), has an epistle passing under his name. It in there is no mention of any of the Four Gospels. There is an epistle attributed to Barnabas, the companion of Paul, but probably written about 130 A.D. It makes no mention of either of the Four Gospels. And, finally, there is the book called "The Shepherd of Hermas," generally conceded to be the work of Hermas or Rome, about the year 150 A.D. It like all the other books and epistles here referred to, is devoted to doctrinal and ethical ends, but it makes no reference to either of the Four Gospels. This comprises the whole of the existing Christian literature from the death of Jesus to the middle of the second century, and not one writer mentions the Four Gospels, or makes the slightest reference to them. They make quotations from



tradition and from other Gospels, but not from our four.

We come to Papias, the Church Father, who lived about 150 A.D. (Davidson, Canon, 123). He says:

"And John the presbyter also said this: 'Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but, as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history or our Lord's discourses; wherefore Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not to pass by anything that he heard, or to state anything falsely in these accounts'" (Euseb., Eccl. Hist. iii. 39).

### **The question is, Does Papias here refer to our Gospel according to Mark?**

1. We do not know what Papias said. His works are lost, and this quotation has been preserved in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History. We only know what Eusebius says he said.
2. Papias preferred tradition to written records (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., iii. 39). The testimony of such a man is not trustworthy. Eusebius says that he was a man of "very limited comprehension," and that the traditions of Jesus which he collected were "rather too fabulous" (Ibid.).
3. Papias does not say that he ever saw the work. He simply mentions a traditions handed down by John the presbyter. It was natural enough that years after Jesus' death his followers should inquire, "Have we no records of his life?" and that a report should start that some one had written such a work. Later one, persons hearing the report, but finding no book, and seeing the opportunity would write one to fill the vacancy. Just as Revelation prophesied an Everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6), and in the 13th century one appeared of that name. Somebody saw an unfulfilled prophesy and took it on himself to make it good.
4. Suppose Papias is referring to our Gospel of Mark; what testimony have we to the authenticity of Jesus' words as contained in it? Just this: Eusebius says that Papias said that John the presbyter said that Mark said that Peter said that Jesus said thus and so. That is the historical lineage of the authenticity of the Gospel of Mark. When the reader has that, he has it all. He knows as much of it as the best theologian does, and is just as competent to decide whether or not it is to be credited. Eusebius goes on to say:

"Such is the account of Papias concerning Mark. Of Matthew, he has stated as follows: 'Matthew composed his history in the Hebrew dialect, and every one translated it as he was able'" (Euseb., Eccl. History, iii. 39).

### **Does Papias refer to our present Gospel according to Matthew?**

1. He says that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. Our Gospel is in Greek.
2. If this is Matthew's Gospel, who translated it? No one knows. The assertion of Christian apologists that the translation was by any specific persons is pure assumption. Jerome asserts that the translator was uncertain (De. Vir. III., 3).
3. There were formerly another Gospel passing under the name of Matthew, which was used by Christians (McClintock and Strong, Cyclop., Art. "Matthew, Gospel of," iv. 3). How are we to know that the church as the right one? Nobody can tell.

To make the matter short, scholars admit that our Gospel of Matthew and Mark were not referred to. Tischendorf grants it ("When Were Our Gospels Written:" by Constantine Tischendorf; Religious Tract Society's edition, authorized. London, 1869, p. 107), and Prof. Davidson fully concedes it:

"Papias speaks of Matthew and Mark; but it is most probable that he had documents which either formed the basis of our present Matthew and Mark, or were taken into them and written over" (Davidson, Canon of the Bible, p. 124).

"The canonical Gospels of Matthew and Mark can not be identified with the logia of Matthew, and the things said and done by Jesus which Mark wrote, mentioned by Papias. The writer himself does not identify them" (Into. N.T., ii. 520).

**This brings us to a period nearly one hundred and twenty years after the death of Jesus, and we have no textual evidence from Christian writers of the existence of our Four Gospels at this time....problematic? YOU BET!!!**

**We will continue our study as we pick up with Justin Martyr and what he contributes to our quest for an honest look into the history of the New Testament.**





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## THE NEW TESTAMENT....THE EARLY CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING IT THAT PRODUCED THE NEED FOR IT

While little is known of the history of the Jewish Canon, of the Christian, fortunately, considerable has been preserved, and the progress of its formation can be traced, step by step, down the centuries. Sadly few Christians know this history and few ever inquire into the development and canonization of the document they stake their Eternal Life upon. Growing up as a Christian, and after attending Southwestern Seminary in Ft.Worth, Texas, where I received an M.Div. I must admit to you I accepted pretty much what was told to me for the most part. Usually I was on two tracks at once; fulfilling my Seminary responsibilities as well as my Pastorate responsibilities. This left little time to study out things in-depth when questions begged answering. Usually I was consumed with preparing for tomorrow's classes and tests as well as the ministry in which I had an active part. It would be a couple years into full-time pastoring following Seminary before I could find the time to investigate the Canon of the New Testament for myself. Up to that time I like most Christians accepted "by faith" what I had been told. Upon researching the Canon in-depth I was startled to discover what was omitted in my Seminary training; and I understand today why it was omitted! Such facts as I will share with you was either not known, or the consequences of such knowledge being made public would impugn the integrity of the Christian Faith!

## WHAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO SEE....THE TRUTH WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Most preaching involves homiletical sermons based on this passage or that passage. Seldom is one confronted with the "big picture;" such seldom is recognized unless conscientious in-depth study is undertaken for some time. Some people possess the ability to see the "forest" in spite of the "trees." In other words, some people, sadly the minority, can read a document like the New Testament and see things that are obvious which the vast majority of people overlook. This is not accomplished by intellect alone for the Holy Spirit certainly illuminated past revelation. Some see it; some do not. I find this the case almost all the time. Two people can look at the same passage or passages at the same time and one can see something the other cannot; even after excessive explanation the "blinded" one sometimes cannot see no matter what is done. Such is the revelation of God. Understand because one has not seen or does not know of a "truth" does not invalidate such truth; truth is truth no matter if it is recognized by one or by all. Truth is primary and must the goal of our study of the Word of God.

## THE TWO CONFLICTING GOSPELS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In what follows I will share and hopefully show you that within the New Testament are two competing and conflicting "gospel." Understand that this fact is not of my creation just I say that this exists, but competent scholars dating back centuries have discussed this issue in detail. So this is not my "personal interpretation" for

volumes of books have been written upon this. The problem is that your Church book store or corner Christian book store has not carried such informative literature.

After the death of Jesus, his followers increased in numbers for a quarter of a century before having any literature. Sects formed, and antagonisms arose. Then Paul wrote his Epistles to strengthen his adherents against the assault of other Christian fractions. This is nothing more than "in-house in-fighting." The most violent altercations occurred, each sect endeavoring to prevail over others. East side was determined to best the other.

**Answer for yourself:** What avenue was chosen to win the debate?

Epistles and gospels and revelations were manufactured and in almost all instances fictitious names of supposed writers would be later fixed upon them to give them greater credibility. The names of Apostles or other persons high in Christian piracy were not looked upon in those days as they are now. Writings were being falsified consistently by fraction after fraction; all trying to promote their particular point of view. Unity was out of the question.

Dionysius of Corinth (170 A.D.) complained that his writings were falsified, but consoled himself by saying that the same thing **(falsification) was done with the "Scriptures of the Lord"** (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., iv. 23).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you hear that? The Christian historian Eusebius records for us that the New Testament Scriptures "were falsified"? Which ones? Can you tell when you read the New Testament?

There is a way, but that is not our discussion at present.

Mosheim, the Christian historian, says:

"There were a number of commentaries filled with impositions and fables on our Savior's life and sentiments, composed soon after his ascent into heaven, by men who, without being bad, perhaps, were superstitious, simple, and piously deceitful. To these were afterwards added other writings, **falsely ascribed to the most holy apostles by fraudulent individuals**" (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Book i, century I., pt. ii., ch. ii.).

*He also says that the early Christians fell into the "pernicious error" of "deeming it not only lawful, but also commendable, to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety."*

"This vice early spread among the Christians. Of this no one will doubt who calls to mind the numerous forgeries of books under the names of eminent men, the Sibylline verses, and I know not what besides, a large mass of which appeared in this age (the second century) and subsequently. I would not say that the orthodox Christians forged all the books of this character: on the contrary, it is probable that the greater part of them originated from the founders of the Gnostic sects. Yet that the Christians who were free from heterodox views were not wholly free from this fault is too clear to be denied" (Ibid., Book i., century II., pt. ii., ch. iii.).

**We should understand that "eye witnesses" to this forgery and falsification of New Testament documents, many in the first and even the second century, attest to such being done long before the canonization of the New Testament. We have first hand evidence that forgeries were being written promoting this and that fraction's views in the names of the Apostles, who in reality, had nothing to do with such writings. That means they did not believe such things quite often; neither did Jesus. Yet these are passed off in Apostolic names as if these teachings were accepted and espoused by Jesus and his Apostles. Sadly, many of these forgeries exist in the Canon of the New Testament today and you never knew it. That is one reason why there are conflicting "gospels" in the New Testament along with many doctrines which the historical Jesus and the Apostles never believed or taught. Non-orthodoxy becomes orthodoxy and you never knew it!**



**Answer for yourself:** Is such falsification of documents in the Apostle's names along with other attested forgeries that ended up in the New Testament the work of the Holy Spirit? Can these teachings be trusted? Is there "truth" mixed up within them and how can one discern the difference? Do you even want to?

## DOCTRINES, DOCTRINES, DOCTRINES EVERYWHERE .....WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Besides the current Gospels bearing the Apostle's names in the New Testament at present, the following is a partial list of the books fabricated and in circulation in that age, in addition to the ones now in the New Testament. Many listed are presented in The Apocryphal New Testament (contains all the existing Gospels and Epistles of the early Christian Church), and many are no longer in existence but referenced in early Church documents. The Gospel of Paul, The Gospel of Peter, the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans, his Epistle to the Ephesians, his Epistle to the Ephesians, his Epistle to Polycarp, the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Epistle of Polycarp to the Phillipians, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sibylline Oracles, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of Perfection, the Gospel of Philip, another Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Judas Iscariot, the Gospel of Basilides, the Gospel of Thaddaeus, the First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, the Gospel of Scythianus, the Gospel of Tatian, the Gospel of Life, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Andrew, the Gospel of Bartholomew, the Gospel of Eve, the Gospel of the Encratites, the false Gospels of Hesychius, the Gospel of Jude, the false Gospels published by Lucianus, the Gospel of Barnabas, the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter and Andrew, the Acts of John, the Acts of Mary, the Acts of Andrew, the Acts of the Apostles made use of by the Ebionites, the Acts of the Apostles by Leucius, the Acts of the Apostles used by the Manichaeans, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Preaching of Paul, the Preaching of Peter, the Doctrine of Peter, the Acts of Philip, the Acts of Thomas, the Acts of Barnabas, the Judgment of Peter, an Epistle of Christ to Peter and Paul, and Epistle of Christ produced by the Manichaeans, the Epistle of Themison, the Epistles of Paul to Seneca, the Epistles of Seneca to Paul, the Revelation of Peter, the Revelation of Paul, the Revelation of Bartholomew, the Revelation of Cerinthus, the Revelation of Stephen, the Revelation of Thomas, the Revelation of Moses, the Revelation of Esdras, the Protevangelion or Gospel of James, Thomas' Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ, the Acts of Pilate or the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle to the Magnesians, the Epistle to the Trallians, the Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, the Epistle to the Philadelphians (forgeries under the name of Ignatius), the Epistle to the Laodiceans (a forgery under the name of Paul), the Pastor of Hermas, the Gospel of Cerinthus, the Gospel of Marcion, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Apelles, the Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, the Gospel of Longinus, and Epistle of Jesus Christ to Abgarus, King of Edessa, and an Epistle of Abgarus to Jesus Christ.

Understand that the above is not all of the books of that time. Of many we have not even the names. I have mentioned, for examples, but thirteen books of Acts, whereas Fabricius made a collection of thirty-six (McClintock and Strong, Acts of the Apostles, "spurious"). It was from such forgery and falsification as this, with its Gospel of Judas Iscariot, Gospel of Eve, and Epistles ascribed to Jesus, that our Four Gospels (which are themselves forgeries and but a part of the common stream) came. **Most of the books of that age were written to uphold or oppose particular doctrines**, as when our Gospel of John is said to have been written to refute the views of Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans (Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., iii. 11. 1). Paul had to warn the Thessalonians not to be troubled or misled by letters falsely purporting to be from him (2 Thess. 2:2), and cautioned them that every genuine letter would bear his signature. Those that do not carry his signature most likely are not his.

## THE HIDDEN CONFLICT BENEATH THE PAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...THE PETRINES VS. THE PAULINES VS. THE JOHANNINES



**Answer for yourself: Did you know before now that the collection of writings called the New Testament contains conflicting views from three theological camps that existed in the first century; each of which denied the other? The sad fact is without this knowledge one reads the New Testament and tries to fit each "puzzle part" into the big picture so to speak. The result is a distortion of the picture and of truth as some of the "pieces" of theology simply don't fit into the truth about Jesus of Nazareth or his followers or what they both believed to be "truth." But without a prior and substantial knowledge of Second Temple Judaism one reads the New Testament as if everything in it belongs to the story of Jesus. Simply said Jesus and his Apostles could not believe much that is taught in the New Testament and would consider it blasphemous.**

**As stated before just because something might be "new" to you and that you have never heard it taught before in your church, or never read of such, does not invalidate it as "truth." Before one says "I don't agree" one needs to evaluate what is being said and give such a fair hearing. That means you have to read and study yourself to see beyond your comfortable experience. To do otherwise makes one an authority based only upon his experience, and I dare say our experiences are often quite lacking as a validator of truth. To admit that a man or woman has 1% percent of all knowledge is ambitious to say the least. Quite often in that 99% of knowledge unknown to such a one can be opportunities unlimited to learn truth he at present does not possess. Humility is a vital part of learning and helps balance the natural instinct to defend what we currently know. We may think we have the "truth" because we have emotions tied to beliefs, but these beliefs can and often be shown to be erroneous. We must have faith in "truth" not our experience. Emotional validation is a poor substitute for "truth."**

**Not to the point at hand. While there was a great number of sects dueling for authority in the first century among "believers", three principal ones command the attention of the student, the Pauline, the Petrine, and the Johannines, or the followers of Paul, of Peter, and of John; a division which is maintained, in a measure, to this day. The Eastern or Greek Church preferred John (Soxomen, Eccl. Hist., vii. 19), and the Western, Peter. The later divided at the time of the Reformation, and the Roman Catholic body maintained the authority of Peter as the only lawful head, while the Protestants now follow Paul. The doctrines which Protestant clergymen preach so much (predestination, foreordination, sanctification, and similar ones) are Paulisms, Jesus never having taught them. The contrast between Peter and Paul raged fiercely in the early days immediately following Jesus, and each was vigorously supported by factions. Paul was the apostle of uncircumcision, and of the Gentiles; Peter, of circumcision and of the Jews. Paul wished to "carry Christ" to the Gentiles and still allow them to be Gentiles. Peter said if they become Christians they must also become Jews, be circumcised, and do as the Jews did in the ceremonial. In those days Paul was not recognized as a lawful teacher of Christianity, nor was he for more than a hundred years (Bronson C. Keeler, A Short History of the Bible, Kessinger Pub. Co, Montana, USA., p. 40). In those days, if Peter should come back to earth and advocate circumcision, baptism before every Sabbath and Festival, continuance of Temple sacrifice, and the strict observance of the Jewish ceremonial, he would not be permitted to preach in any Christian church, Catholic or Protestant. People do not realize how far from primitive Christianity and the real beliefs and teachings of Jesus and the Apostles they have gone.**

**Paul said, if any one, even an angel from heaven, preached any other gospel than he did, that person should be accursed (Gal. 1:8). You may not know this but Paul, in writing this verse, was writing against the Apostles and the Jerusalem Church! He claimed authority as an apostle equal to that of the apostles at Jerusalem. But they had been appointed by Yeshua in person, or, eleven of them had been, and they had elected a twelfth to fill the place of Judas (Acts 1:15-26). Peter superintending the process; while Paul had appointed himself; and for him to claim to be their equal was something to which they could not submit. That is why Paul defends his self-appointed Apostleship continually in his Epistles. Paul asked, "Am I not an apostle?" (I Cor. 9:1). And James and the other Apostles said he was not. Revelation (a Johannine and therefore an anti-Pauline work) says, referring to Paul, "And thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). Paul claimed that he and his followers were still Jews, even if they did not practice circumcision (2 Cor. 11:22 ff.), but Peter and his friends denied it, and Revelation, again thrusting at Paul, says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but the synagogue of Satan (Rev. 2:9); and "them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie" (Rev. 3:9).**



**Answer for yourself:** Hard to believe? Well you need to study something other than the biased and forged New Testament if you want the truth about the Early Church.

Paul conceded that he had caught some of his followers by being crafty and using guile (2 Cor. 12:16):

*2 Cor 12:16 16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.*

The Strong's Number for guile is #1388 dolos- craft, deceit, guile

In an Epistle generally acknowledged of Pauline authorship we find his self-admission of being deceitful in teaching Christ.

**Answer for yourself:** In Paul spreading "his gospel" do you think the Holy Spirit approved of his "deceit"?

Paul thought that if he had misrepresented as to his apostolic authority, since good had come of it, no harm had been done. I wonder if God believes the end justifies the means?

*"For if the truth of God had more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why yet am I also judged a sinner?" (Rom. 3:7).*

Paul's early spirit as a persecutor appears when he wishes that those anti-Paulines who troubles the Galatians were cut off (Gal. 5:12). He once met Peter in Antioch, and an open conflict occurred (Gal. 2:11-21). Contrary to redactions history in the New Testament Peter was right and Paul wrong! Paul was teaching against the Covenant stipulations for non-Jews and when the men from James appeared the Church disbanded and left Paul alone.

The Ebionites, one of the most powerful of the early sects, rejected Paul, and said he was an apostate from the law (Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., i. 26). The Clementine Homilies attach him bitterly under the name of Simon Magus. They reject his Epistles entirely. Justin Martyr rejected him, and scarcely made notice of his writings. Hegesippus would not use his Epistles, and said, substantially, that he had falsified Scripture (Davidson, Canon, 115). Whether you know it or not Paul consistently misquotes the Old Testament for his advantage. Those not well versed in the Jewish Scriptures seldom notice this since the Septuagint is a purposeful mistranslation of the Jewish Masoretic Text by the Greek-Jewish Pythagorean and Buddhists of Alexandria, Egypt, and the Septuagint served as the base for Paul's quotes. Rather strange that Paul would misquote the Jewish Scriptures that Jesus used as taken from the Hebrew don't you think? The Paulines, on the other hand, rejected the Epistles to the Hebrews, which Christians now attribute to Paul, and they also rejected Revelation (Ibid., 118).

The followers of Valentinus were Paulines (Clem. Al., Strom., viii. 17), as were those of Marcion; those of Basilides were Petrine (Ibid., ). The Cerinthians opposed St. John (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 273) as well as Peter and Paul (Epiph., Haer., xxviii. 2-4).; the Simonians opposed Peter (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 273), the Ophites rejected St. John and St. Paul (Ibid., p. 282). They were snake worshippers (Webster's Unabridged Dict., "Ophite"), and claimed to have derived their doctrines from James the brother of Jesus (Hipp. Haer., v. 7). Another sect, the Donatists, held that there were no virtuous people in the Christian church except such as belonged to their sect, and required all who joined them to be re-baptized (Webster's Unabr. Dict., "Donatism"). Jerome was bitterly hostile to Origen's views, even accusing the latter, substantially, of heresy (Ency. Brit., "Rufinus"). Rufinus adopted Origen's theories, and Jerome, who had been Rufinus' dearest friend, loaded him with the most terrible reproaches, until the quarrel became the scandal of the Church in that time (Ency. Brit., "Rufinus").

It sounds strangely to hear persons in these days express a desire to "return to primitive Christianity, when all was peace and love." There never was such a time. Therefore, understanding the above, one must understand that within the New Testament are competing and conflicting sect's beliefs all rolled into one and the average

**Christian reads the "whole" of the New Testament as if this was given by God and tries to fit the conflicting pieces in one whole theological system. Thus many current beliefs held by Christians are simply wrong and unfortunately one's conduct is often determined by such false beliefs and forgeries and you never know unless you study. We have fallen that far from the faith of the early Jewish believers who knew Yeshua personally and what he truly taught.**





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## THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH AT FIRST WERE NOT CONSIDERED INSPIRED

As in the case of the Old Testament, so in that of the New Testament, when the books composing it came into the world they were not considered inspired. They were looked upon the same way other books are. No one thought of calling them the word of God. The Old Testament was considered by the early Christians as inspired, and for two or three centuries after Jesus it was their only Bible (Westcott, Canon, 55). The first instance of the canonization of any of the New Testament books was about 170 A.D., when, in the Second Epistle of Peter (2 Peter 3:16), Paul's epistles are regarded by some as if Scripture, and that was simply a bothersome recognition of Paul after the long quarrel between the friends of himself and of Peter (Davidson, Canon, 134). For a century and a quarter after the death of Jesus the New Testament was not recognized to be as authoritative as the Old Testament (Westcott, Canon, 179; Davidson, Canon 122). And when Paul said, "The Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15), he meant exclusively the Old Testament (Westcott, Canon, 55.) Previous to the year 170 A.D., wherever the early Christian Fathers used the phrase "Scripture" or "It is written," they always meant the Old Testament (Davidson, Canon, 119). The name "New Testament" was first given to the collection by Tertullian (Adv. Prax. 15), about the year 210 A.D., and the collection then laced many books which are in it now. The word canon, as signifying a list of authoritative Scriptures, was not used till Origen's time (Davidson, Canon, 4). The word "canonical" was used first in the decree of the Council of Laodicea (Ibid., 5), about 363 A.D. The word "Bible" was first applied to the books collectively by St. Chrysostom in the fifth century (Westcott, Canon, 438). New Testament copyists felt at liberty to change the language to suit their own ideas by taking out texts and inserting new ones (Tischendorf, "When Were Our Gospels Written?" Religious Tract Society's authorized edition, London, 1869, p. 15). Prof. Davidson says:

"Papias (150 A.D.) knew nothing, so far as we can learn, of a New Testament Canon...He had no conception of canonical authority attaching to any part of the New Testament. His language implies the opposite, in that he prefers unwritten tradition to the Gospel he speaks of. He neither felt the want nor knew the existence of inspired Gospels" (Davidson, Canon, 123).

"It is clear that the earliest Church Fathers did not use the books of the New Testament as sacred documents, clothed with divine authority, but followed for the most part, at least till the middle of the second century, apostolic tradition orally transmitted" (Ibid., 136).

"One thing appears from the early corruption of the sacred records spoken of by Irenaeus, Origen, and others, that they were not regarded with the veneration necessarily attaching to infallible documents" (Ibid., 161).

"The conception of a Catholic canon was realized about the same time as that of a Catholic Church. One hundred and seventy years from the coming of Christ elapsed before the collection of the New Testament books assumed a form that carried with it the idea of holy and inspired" (Ibid., 136).

During the first half of the second century "the New Testament writing did not stand on the same level with the Old, and were not yet esteemed sacred and inspired like the Jewish Scriptures" (Ibid., 122).

**"Justin Martyr's canon (150 A.D.), so far as divine authority and inspiration are concerned, was the Old Testament....In his time none of the Gospels had been canonized, not even the synoptics, if, indeed, he knew them all. Oral tradition was the chief fountain of Christian knowledge, as it had been for a century. In his opinion this tradition was embodied in writing, but the documents in which he looked for all that related to Christ were not the Gospels alone. He used others freely, not looking upon any as inspired" (*Ibid.*, 129).**

**"It is certain that they (the early Christians) believed the Old Testament books to be a divine and infallible guide. But the New Testament was not so considered. The latter collection was not called Scripture, or put on a par with the Old Testament as sacred and inspired, till the time of Theophilus of Antioch (180 A.D.)" (*Ibid.* 5).**

**Now the conditions are reversed. People in this age of the world believe the New Testament is inspired, but they do not believe the Old Testament is.**

**"Two things stand out most clearly-the comparatively late idea of a canonical New Testament literature, and the absence of critical principles in determining it. The former was not entertained till the latter part of the second century. The conception of canonicity and inspiration attaching to the New Testament books did not exist till the time of Irenaeus" (*Ibid.* 163).**

**"Not until the latter half of the second century (180 A.D.) did the present Gospels assume a canonical position, superseding other works of a similar character and receiving a divine authority" (Davidson, *Intro. N.T.*, ii 520).**

**"Along with this process (the union of Paulines, Petrines, and the other fractions, about the middle of the second century), and as an important element in it, the writings of the apostles and apostolic men were uncritically taken from tradition and elevated to the rank of divine documents. It was not the rise of new dissensions "within the church" which led to the formation of a Christian canon; rather the idea of a "Catholic Church" require a standard of appeal in apostolic writings, which were not invested with an authority that did not belong to them from the first" (*Ibid.*, 168).**

**Tischendorf, the great orthodox scholar, in speaking of the period of canonization, says:**

**"It was at this time....that the Church...began to venerate and regard as sacred the writings which the apostles had left behind them" (When Were Our Gospels Written?" The Religious Tract Society's edition, London, 1869, p. 95).**

**The phrase "began to regard as sacred" indicates that before that time that regard had not existed. Canon Westcott says:**

**"It can not, however, be denied that the idea of the inspiration of the New Testament, in the sense in which it is maintained now, was the growth of time" (Westcott, *Canon*, 55).**

**One of the most curious intellectual phenomena presented to the student of religious history is that of men admitting that the idea of inspiration is a growth, and still not perceiving the absurdity of supposing that inspiration is a fact. And yet, thousands of Christian theologians present it.**

**We find, then, that, among the early disputing sects, it became necessary to have some authoritative court of appeal, and when the Catholic Church began to establish itself and to require such an authority, its officials, the Christian Fathers, asserted that these new books were inspired, and the word of God. But it was said simply to have authority for the new doctrines. The Fathers did not limit themselves to the books now in the New Testament, but selected such as agreed with their adopted views. The restrictions in the number of books were made later, and thus our present Bible was formed. But the Bible did not form the beliefs. The beliefs formed the Bible. Only such books were accepted in the New Testament as advocated the previously entertained dogmas. And the idea of inspiration passed over from the Old Testament to the New, by reason of associations, proximity, and similarity of use.**





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## WERE THE CHURCH FATHERS COMPETENT TO DECIDE THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever stopped and considered the competency of the early Church Fathers especially in light of the fact they you trust them today to have selected and preserved the Word of God in the New Testament for you which you are staking your eternal life upon? Have you ever studied out what they wrote or said in their writings? Were they competent for the task? Can we see the Holy Spirit in what they said and did?

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever invested your time to personally inquire into these issues, or have you like most just taken the New Testament as handed down from these men for millennia and accepted it without question because of "church tradition?"

Most likely you haven't. Few have I find out as most Christians have implicitly been taught to accept that the Holy Spirit led these men in the selection of the books in the Christian New Testament. Maybe you are beginning to doubt somewhat; especially since reading these articles you have seen that most likely the apostles of Jesus had little if anything to do with the writing of the Gospels which carry their names.

It never ceases to amaze me how the Protestant, who refused to be a Catholic and disbelieves Catholic dogma and doctrine, readily accepts the Catholic Bible as it was these same men who were given these "doctrines" supposedly by the Holy Spirit who put together, added to, and deleted from the New Testament supposedly by the same Holy Spirit. Thank goodness that the New Testament is correct but the doctrines of the men who put it together are wrong. It just seem ridiculous does it not?

## QUALIFIED FOR THE TASK?...YOU MUST DECIDE...BUT KNOW THE FACTS FIRST

Since the early Christian Fathers originated the theory that the books of the New Testament are inspired, the question arises, "Where they competent to do so?" The popular idea is that they were learned, profound, venerable men, worthy of the highest respect; and so vigorously has this been enforced, that one of the charges on which Servetus was burned to death by John Calvin was that he had spoken disrespectfully of the Fathers ("Servetus and Calvin," by R.Willis, M.D., London, 1877, p. 308). The facts are quite the reverse. The early Christian Fathers were extremely ignorant and superstitious; and they were singularly incompetent to deal with the supernatural. The men who laid the foundation of the canon were Irenaeus (200 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (210 A.D.), and Tertullian (220 A.D.), and of them Prof. Davidson says:

*"The three Fathers of whom we are speaking had neither the ability nor inclination to examine the genesis of documents surrounded with an apostolic halo. No analysis of their authenticity and genuineness was seriously attempted....The ends which they had in view, their polemic motives, their unclerical, inconsistent assertions, their want of sure data, detract from their testimony."*

***Their decisions were much more the result of pious feeling, biased by the theological speculations of the time, than the conclusions of a sound judgment. The very arguments they use to establish certain conclusions show weakness of perception" (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, 156 ff).***

"The infancy of the canon was cradled in an uncritical age, and rocked with traditional ease. Conscientious care was not directed from the first to the well-authenticated testimony of eye-witnesses. Of the three Fathers who contributed most to its early growth, Irenaeus was credulous and blundering. Tertullian passionate and one-sided, and Clement of Alexandria, imbued with the treasure of Greek wisdom, was mainly occupied with ecclesiastical ethics....**(Their) assertions show both ignorance and exaggeration**" (The Canon of the Bible, 155).

## **LOOKING AT EXAMPLES OF THE ABOVE....**

Some citations will illustrate for you the mental characteristics and competency of those who selected and chose for you a "new" Bible that replaced the one Jesus used.

You should be familiar with the fable of the phoenix, which was said to renew its life every five hundred years.

Clement of Rome (100 A.D.) thought it had an actual existence, and he asserted that it was typical of the resurrection (Ep. Ad Corinth, xxv. P. 123). Tertullian believed the same thing (De Resurrect., 13, vol. 2., p 236). Celsus, the noted anti-Christian writer, used this fact to illustrate the credulity of the early Christians, and Origen defended the fable rather than accept the just criticism (Contra Celsum, iv. 98). The writer of the Epistle of Barnabas believed an ancient superstition that the hyena changed its sex every year, being alternately male and female (Ep. Barnabas, ch. x), that a hare had as many young as it was years old, that a weasel conceived with its mouth, that the reason why men should eat only animals with a cloven hoof was because the righteous people lived in this world, but had expectations in the next through reincarnation (Ep. Barnabas, ch. x). Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) believed in demons. He said that they were the offspring of angels who loved the daughters of men (Apol. ii, 5), that insane people (demoniacs) were possessed and tortured by the souls of the wicked who had died in their sins (Ibid., i. 18), and that this was a proof of the immortality of the soul.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch that? For Justin Martyr, one of the most important of the Greek philosopher-Apologists in the early church, whose writings represent the first positive encounter of Christian revelation with Greek philosophy and laid the basis for a theology which we have been taught today, believed that mental illness was proof of the immortality of the soul?

And we accept the religious doctrines and replacement religion set forth by this man without question Sunday after Sunday. It look like his judgment is off quite considerably to me.

He even said angels eat manna (Dial., 57). Has he ever had lunch with them?

Athenagoras (168 A.D.) declared that the strong belief of Christians that angels have been distributed by the Logos throughout the universe, and that they were kept busy regulating the whole (Legatio pro Christ., x). Some of the angels loved the daughters of men, and fell, and thus were begotten giants, or demons (Ibid., xxiv). These last roamed about the world, performing the evil deeds peculiar to their natures (Ibid., xxv.).

Theophilus (180 A.D.) said that the pains of women in child-birth and the fact that serpents crawl on their bellies were proofs that the account of the fall, as given in Genesis, was true (Ad Autol., ii 23).

Tertullian believed that the hyena changed its sex (De Pallio, 3), and that the stag renewed its youth by eating poisonous snakes (Ad Scap., 3), and that eclipses and comets were signs of God's anger and forerunners of national disasters (Ad Scap., 3), and that volcanoes were openings into hell (De Penitentia, 12), and that the volcanic condition was a punishment inflicted on the mountains to serve as a warning to the wicked (De



Penitentia, 12), that demons sent diseases upon the bodies of men (Apol., 22), blighted apples and grain (Apol., 22), and produced accidents and untimely death (De Anima, 57). He said that a corpse in a cemetery once kindly moved to make room for another corpse to be placed beside it (Ibid., 51).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch the above? We have been talking about the "big shots" in the history of early Christianity and it seems they were highly steeped in superstition more than truth. I don't know about you but how can you trust such a one with such judgment and beliefs for anything of a spiritual nature? This sounds more like X-files than the Holy Spirit.

Clement of Alexandria (220 A.D.) said that hail storms, tempests, and plagues were caused by demons (Strom., vi. 3), that credulity was necessary to render faith easy (Strom., ii. 6), and that events in the life of Abraham were typical and prophetic of arithmetic and astronomy (Ibid., vi. 11). He kindly allowed that Jews and Gentile would have the gospel preached to them in hell thus accepting another sun-myth (Strom., vi. 6). Clement's imagination was naturally lascivious. His chapter on the immodesty of Pagan women in the bath (Paedag., iii. 5) betrays his hatred for the upper classes and shows that if a bishop in the Church could use such language, the early Christians of Alexandria must have been from the very lowest grades of society. While this indignant at the supposed wickedness of the heathen, he wrote a book so unseemly (Strom., iii) that the English editors did not venture to translate it, and in it he quotes probably more from the Bible than in any of his other books.

Origen (254 A.D.) said that the sun, moon, and stars were living creatures, endowed with reason and free will, and occasionally inclined to sin (De Princip., i. 7). He was not certain if the celestial orbs and their "souls" were created at the same time as their initial creation. The light emitted by them was not the reflection of the sun, but light from knowledge and wisdom as reflected from the Eternal light. He maintained the stars and planets had "free will" and that they were rational creatures because they moved in the sky (De Princip., i. 7). The sun, moon, and stars, according to him, were "subject to vanity" (De Princip., i. 7), and they prayed to God through his only begotten Son (Contra Celsum, v. 11).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch that? Again, I don't know about you but how can you trust such a one with such judgment and beliefs for anything of a spiritual nature? This sounds more like X-files than the Holy Spirit.

Famine, the blighting of vines and fruit trees, and the destruction of beasts and men, were all the work of demons (Contra Celsum, viii. 31).

Lactantius (325 A.D.) believed that demons entered men and injured them through the viscera, producing diseases and mental distempered (Epitome of the Divine Institutes, 28), but that the sign of the cross (from sun worship) would drive them away (Divine Institutes, vi. 27). Well, that makes me feel better.

Cyril of Jerusalem (386 A.D.). quoted from Clement the story of the phoenix, and declared that God had created the bird expressly to enable men to believe in the resurrection (Catech., xviii. 8). He said it was a wonderful bird; and yet it was irrational-it did not sing psalms to God, and it knew nothing of His only begotten Son (Ibid., 244).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch that? Again, I don't know about you but how can you trust such a one with such judgment and beliefs for anything of a spiritual nature? Of course the bird would not know of the Son of God had it existed in the first place; it was a bird in the first place!

St. Chrysostom (407 A.D.) believed the air was filled with angels (In Ascens., J.C.). Jerome (430 A.D.) believed just the opposite; that the air was filled with demons (Epis. To Ephes., iii.6).

St. Augustine's (430 A.D.) New Testament was the same as ours today. Now we begin to see conformity of New Testament texts after the influence of St. Augustine. The influence of St. Augustine in establishing the Bible was greater probably than any other Father or than any council. People now attribute to God what was really the work of one man. But when we really study the man his judgment is not to be trusted in anything let alone the selection of the canon or the creation of Christian doctrine of which he is credited. Just read this and think.

The incredible and very ridiculous stories related by Christian Fathers and ecclesiastical historians, on whom we are obliged to rely for information on the most important of subjects, show us how untrustworthy these men were. We have, for instance, the story related by St. Augustine, who is styled 'the greatest of the Latin Fathers,' of his preaching the Gospel to people without heads. In his 33d Sermon he says: 'I was already Bishop of Hippo, when I went into Ethiopia with some servants of Christ there to preach the Gospel. In this country we saw many men and women without heads, who had two great eyes in their breasts; and in countless still more southly, we saw people who had but one eye in their foreheads'" (Taylor, Syntagma, p. 52).

**Answer for yourself:** How can you trust such a man to determine for you what books are to be in your New Testament let alone the Bible? Did the Holy Spirit have an off day when St. Augustine preached to people with one-eye in each breast or when he preached to people without heads or who had only one eye in their foreheads, but yet led St. Augustine into all truth concerning the canon for us today? Is this man trustworthy and what about the vast other stuff he said, or does this information impugn every thing he ever said and wrote?

St. Augustine (430 A.D.) likewise believed in demons. They tried to deceive men by persuading them that they were gods (De Civit. Del., viii. 22). They were called demons from the Greek "daimones" on account of their knowledge. To the early Fathers exact learning was devilish. Reading this web-page would make you a candidate for being declared "possessed."

**Answer for yourself:** Can you imagine that after reading what you just read?

St. Augustine also believed that there was also a class of satyrs and fauns called "Incubi," to whose lascivious attacks and sexual rape women were constantly subject. Hollywood would have loved this and in fact has made several movies about this phenomena. As if that was not enough he also believed that demons termed by the Gauls "Dusii" perpetrated daily the same uncleanness. He maintained that there was so much trustworthy evidence that to deny it was an impertinence (Ibid., xv. 23). So real and so universal was the belief in these lewd spirits that, in 1894, Innocent VIII issued a Papal bull against these spirits. Incredible!

## I THINK YOU GET THE POINT

The erroneous and grotesque beliefs of the Christian Fathers could be quoted until they filled a large volume, but these few will illustrate the intellectual condition of the ages which originated and transmitted the New Testament to us. It will be said that the Fathers were as good as their times. That can not be maintained. They were not even as good. **In short, the sum of the charge against the Fathers is that they were not competent to tell what was evidence of a fact and what was not.** They cited as evidence of a theory things which are not in the slightest degree such, and they would look directly into the face of evidence which established theories they did not endorse, and would still be unable to see that it was evidence. Now, if the Fathers were great scholars, like you have been led to believe, they would not have been so persistently in the wrong. They should have seen the truth at least as easily as the others did; like the Jewish scholars and Rabbis for instance. What has become of the names and the memories of the men in those day who had the truth and stood up for the truth against such absurdity? Are they even yet called great? The Christian Church has been honoring the wrong persons.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that these Christian Fathers were as great as their time, I deny that they or their age were competent to form a Bible for their age.

## STUPID...BUT SPIRITUALLY INSIGHTFULL?...OH...COME ONE NOW!

But one apology has ever been made for these remarkable errors of the Fathers, and that is "spiritual insight." Christian defenders say that, while the Fathers were ignorant, stupid, limited in intelligence, and even



superstitious, they were yet "gifted with great spiritual insight." This term signifies the possibility of perceiving something which does not exist and where it does not exist. It is synonymous with "unlimited credulity."

Not alone in nature, but also in literature, the Fathers were ignorant and unscholarly. Jerome and Origen were the only ones who could read Hebrew (Davidson, On The Canon, of the Bible, p. 170). Justin Martyr quotes from Jeremiah and calls it Isaiah (Apol. i. 54). Clement of Alexandria quotes as Scripture passages which are not in the Bible at all (Strom., ii 6). He quotes as Paul's, words which are not in Paul (Strom., vi. 5). In quoting from an opponent he would insert words not in the original (Strom., ii. 4), and he even does the same in quoting from the Bible (On Chastity, vii). Tertullian quotes as in Leviticus a passage not in that book (On Monogamy, vi.). He misquotes history (Strom., iv. 26). Tertullian cites as Isaiah a passage not in that book, but in Revelation (On Modesty, vi). Besides that he is frequently inaccurate in a great number of his quotations.

**The Gospel writers, supposedly under the anointing of the Holy Spirit**, committed the same blunders. The man who wrote the Gospel of Matthew attributes to Jeremiah (Matt. 27:9) a passage which is in Zechariah (Zech. 11:12-13). The writer of the Gospel of Mark attributes to Isaiah (Mark. 1:2) a passage which is in Malachi (Mal. 3:1). The early manuscripts insert the name of Isaiah as the authority but the later ones omitted it because it was such a clear error.

One curious illustration of this, and of how sacred books are formed, is seen in the excess of the Catholic over the Protestant Bible. The former has quite a number of books which are not in the latter; such as the two of Maccabees and the Song of the Three Children-which Protestants call the apocryphal Old Testament, but which Catholics consider as much the word of God as any other books. The ancient Jews did not consider these authoritative, and the Palestinian Jews did not include them in the sacred collection. The Greek Jews, however, thought more of them, and the Alexandrian Jews placed them in an appendix to the Greek canons as the end of their Bibles, the same as they used to be printed in our old Bibles. The early Christians of Africa could not read Hebrew; they had to use the Greek manuscripts, and as they saw the apocryphal books in the collection, they supposed they were a part of it. The result was that the early Bible-makers in the African church included the apocryphal books because they were not intelligent enough to leave them out (Davidson, On The Canon of the Bible, p. 83). St. Augustine included them because he found them there, and the Catholic Church retained them because St. Augustine did.

So, there you have a rather quick over-view on the competency of those who chose the books for the New Testament, added and subtracted books, added to them as well as took from them, edited them, and were responsible for the New Testament as we have it today. **Honestly, these accounts do not foster confidence.** The years of study invested by me has shown me the utter unreliability of the New Testament for one's faith and practice of such faith; let alone a plan of salvation for the world to come. It is my hope after your examination of our other web-sites where we detail the multiple errors, the purposeful misquotations, mistranslations, and verses lifted out of context from the Old Testament and show you how they were used completely in a different way in the New Testament along with supposed prophetic authority, that you are coming to see how the faith of Jesus was perverted by the early Gentile Church. This article is just another puzzle part for surely after reading this you should have many doubts about the competency of those who chose for you what was and was not God's Word, and those affiliated with the movements these men represented. Hopefully you are becoming more serious in your study into why we were given a New Testament in the first place; let alone be given a Bible that replaced the one Jesus read. Shalom.



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# THE CRITICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY INTO THE CANONIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...CAN THIS BE THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

## INTRODUCTION

Now we come to the formation of the Christian canon; to the process by which it evolved. Again I bring to your attention what very distinguished men, like Brooke Foss Westcott D.D., D.C.L., honorary fellow of Trinity and King's College, at Cambridge, had to say to help us today understand how one should approach the New Testament writings let alone determine what kind of authority we should attach to such documents, especially in light of the prior existence of the Torah and the Tanakh, the Scriptures used by Jesus. As you read this information balance what you learn with the prior held beliefs "from Roman Church tradition" as to the importance of such documents.

*Beginning with the first two centuries of the Christian Church, we find that there was no New Testament as we now understand that term.*

More than forty Gospels and a much greater number of Acts, Epistles, and Revelations were in use by the Church corporate. The writer of the Gospel according to Luke says, "Forasmuch as many have taken to hand to set forth in order a declaration of these things," etc., showing that when he wrote many Gospels were already in existence. From the mass writings then in circulation, the books in our New Testament were taken, and the other books out of use (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 183).

Origen says:

"And that not four Gospels, but very many were written, out of which these we have were chosen and delivered to the churches, we may perceive" (In Proem. Luc., hom. I, vol 2. P. 210).

The selection of books, and the formation of the list, was a **very slow process**, and it is "impossible to point to any period as marking the date at which our present canon was determined" (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 496).

"This result (the formation of the canon) was obtained gradually, spontaneously, silently. **There is no evidence to show that any time the claims of the apostolic writings was to be placed on equal footing with the Old Testament, which formed the first Christian Bible,...this was deliberately discussed and admitted...** Step by step the books which were stamped with apostolic authority were collected from the other works which contained the traditions of less authoritative teachers" (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 345).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you understand that those who first collected such writing admitted among themselves and have passed down their own thoughts that these collection of writings were not intended to replace the Old Testament in authority...let alone be considered another "Bible?" But yet it regrettably has happened! We have



added to the Word of God whether we want to admit it or not! It seems ridiculous to me today that we consider documents as the "Word of God" then those who originally collected them did not!

*What should immediately strike you is the fact that those who decided we need a "new book" were fully aware that such a collection was never to have the same authority for one's religious beliefs as did the existing Jewish Scripture...the Old Testament!*

This is a very damaging quote from a most renowned New Testament scholar that impugns the integrity and the authority of the whole of the New Testament.

## RELIGIOUS IN-FIGHTING OF THE VARIOUS EARLY CHRISTIAN SECTS ...WHOSE VIEWS WERE TO BE "INSPIRED" AND WHOSE NOT?

When the Catholic Church began to be formed, about the year 170-180 A.D., the tendency was to use fewer books, and the ones accepted as authoritative began to be called "divine".

**Answer for yourself:** Do you know what is the meaning to the word "divine?" There is a big difference between deity and divine. According to Webster's Dictionary the word "divine" means:

1. Pertaining to God, or to a heathen deity or false god,
2. Partaking the nature of God; godlike; heavenly; sacred; holy; excellent in the highest degree; apparently above what is human; relating to divinity or theology.

You should have noticed the glaring absence of any mention that "divine" means originated with God or comes from God. Nowhere in such understanding is room for a concept of "infallible, inerrant, or even inspired." Thus being so, and upon serious study, and in-depth analysis, one can quickly see how these documents which appear "godly and sacred" are exposed in their true colors....conflicting documents relating to theologies of various sects and their conflicting and competing dogmas...each intended for mastery over each other. The early church Fathers knew this; it is we who have approached these documents with false suppositions about their value and authority for our lives.

You should understand that the early Fathers originated the theory that these books were divinely inspired, and in another place that the heretics did so. There is no contradiction here. Both the Fathers and the heretics were Christians! They simply belonged to different sects. In the contest for the mastery it so happened that the sects to which the Fathers belonged...the Petrine...gained the supremacy, and from them arose the present Christian Church. Had the other sects gained the victory, their Fathers would now be the orthodox authorities and the others would be the heretics. Now, it is true that in the so-called heretical sects originated the **theory that the New Testament was divine and of equal authority with the Old**, but that doctrine would not have been accepted by us had not the orthodox Fathers of that time adopted it into their sects. We are the descendants of the orthodox sects, and so far as we are concerned the early Fathers originated the theory. **They did it to have authority for the new and unusual doctrines coming into use, just as the heretics were using the same theory to support their doctrines.** The books were, in those days, mainly in the hands of the bishops (Davidson, On The Canon Of The Bible, p. 164). The laity had nothing to do with them. Not one in ten thousand of the laity could read. **The recognition of the authority of the New Testament was brought entirely by ecclesiastical usage** (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 185).

As you read the next sentence fully understand the impact of such a fact. Each Father included in the newly forming New Testament what books he liked and which promoted his positions, and excluded what he did not like. Sounds like God to me! The consequence were to be expected; there were as many Bibles in those days as

there were Fathers engaged in making them. In their differences of opinion as to what constituted the canon, the Fathers made no attempt to compare the books by a critical investigation into the history of the records themselves (*Ibid.*, p. 406). Dr. Westcott says the canon was "formed by instinct and not by argument" (*Ibid.*, p. 386). Instinct is not a good thing to form a Bible by. The Fathers contended for centuries as to what should go into the list until they found they could not agree, and then the church held councils and voted on it, and the books which polled the most votes went into this "divine collection."

St. Augustine was a great advocate of this plan. He thought that the books which were received by all the churches should be in the Bible, and that in the case of books on which there was a difference of opinion, the majority voice of the churches should decide it (*De. Doct. Christ.*, ii. 8). So in other words, according to St. Augustine, according to which fraction or sect that had majority power would come the determination which was "of God and what was not." This sounds right to me, how about you? In other words, what ever group had dominance and political, economic, and military power would flow the "divine oracles." I hope you have sense to understand the ludicrousness of such folly. Let me share another thing that was said by this distinguished man, St. Augustine. We have, for instance, the story related by St. Augustine, who is styled "the greatest of the Latin Fathers," of his preaching the Gospel to people without heads. In his 33d Sermon he says:

*"I was already Bishop of Hippo, when I went into Ethiopia with some servants of Christ there to preach the Gospel. In his country we saw many men and women without heads, who had two great eyes in their breasts: and in countries still more southly, we saw people who had but one eye in their foreheads" (Rev. Robert Taylor, *Syntagma*, p. 52).*

Now I ask you, is it wise to follow anything from such a man as this? Surely this should be enough for you to want to seriously begin a study into the men who decided what you believe today for your Eternal Life!

An exact parallel to this is found in the manner of making changes in the recent New Testament revision. On the first reading of a disputed text a majority vote authorized the amendment, but on the second and final reading a two-thirds vote of all those present was necessary (*Revised New Testament*, Preface, II. fifth rule of May, 25, 1879). But even this plan did not work satisfactorily in the church, for the councils whom you were taught to believe were led by the Holy Spirit in the selection of these books differed continually for centuries! Quite often such disagreements on Heavenly things ended in wholesale murder of bishops by bishops. It seems like God cannot make up His mind let alone infill those making such monumental decisions for all mankind with the fruit of the Spirit. One council as led by the Holy Spirit would adopt a list inserting books which another rejected, and rejecting books which another had inserted, and this continued over and over and over again until the church held one great council which adopted a summary final list which even contradicted itself. The ultimate capstone of such religious bickering and folly was summed-up by the the final ecclesiastical order that has poisoned all of Christianity even to this day:

*"This is the Bible. Believe it or be damned."*

Thus Christianity has become an exclusive religion that is ingrained by such a tenant which mandates belief in these conflicting and contradicting documents for one's Eternal life; such documents which can be shown to be paralleled to Gentile paganism no less. Why not find out what Jesus really believed about Eternal Life and what was really the Bible for him, and adopt his religious belief system as yours? I would think that as a Christian you would want to do that. Well, this is but the introduction to what I will show you as we begin a serious study into the formation of the New Testament and the role of the Holy Spirit within it...if He had one at all. You will have to be the judge, but you need to know the facts in order to make an intelligent decision on the matter.





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# THE INFLUENCE OF MARCION UPON THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

## THE FIRST COLLECTION OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS....MARCION

The first collection of New Testament books ever made was by Marcion, called "the heretic," about the year 145 A.D. (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 308). It consisted of one Gospel and ten of Paul's Epistles (Tertullian, Adv. Marc., v.), and **they were not then considered the word of God.**

"Faith is the divine authority or inspiration of current books had not yet arisen...[Marcion] did not consider Paul's Epistles inspired or of divine authority (Davidson, Intro. N. T., ii. 516-517).

You need to realize that this was seventy-five years after Paul was dead. The Epistles which Marcion accepted were Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, First and Second Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Phillipians, and Philemon (Davidson, Intro. N. T., ii. 516-517). He omitted First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews, which we have since called genuine and placed in the Bible. His Gospel has been the subject of much controversy, the orthodox people asserting that it was Luke's mutilated; and the unbelievers denying this, and asserting that it was the manuscript from which Luke's Gospel was subsequently made up. The facts are these: Marcion's Gospel had no name (Tert., Adv. Haer., iv. 2). **Indeed, as St. Chrysostom observes, none of the apostles affixed their signatures to the Gospels now bearing their names** (Hom. I. in Epis. Ad. Rom.). That was the work of the church long afterward, and we have simply the church's word that they are genuine. And thus we find that in Marcion's time, more than a century after Jesus was crucified, even if a Gospel by Luke were in existence, his name had not yet been attached to it.

**Answer for yourself:** If Marcion's Gospel was Luke's Gospel the question arises: "How does it happen that a heretic was in possession of a genuine Gospel before the church itself was?" That's a good one. The inference is plain. It was the Luke we would later have "re-worked" by the Catholic Church how would later add the first three chapter which were missing in Marcion's Gospel. That explains all the errors and mistakes in these three chapters.

**Answer for yourself:** Marcion was considered later by the Catholic Church (when they were in authority) a heretic. Can you see that such branding of people as "heretics" was little more than saying that they disagree with you? This is important when you read early church history because many who had the truth, like the Ebionites, are branded by the Catholic Encyclopedia and early Catholic Fathers as "heretics." Understand this is nothing more than Gentiles disagreeing with Jews. The Jews automatically are deemed "heretics." These Jews, the Ebionites, just happened to be the first followers of Yeshua in the first century. Should such ones who knew him personally be called "heretics" by those who replaced the religion of Jesus with one of their own making?

Marcion's Gospel was identical, word for word, with about three-fourths of the present Gospel of Luke, and it was shorter than Luke. Now, you should know how annotations made on the margin of a manuscript find their way into the text in the process of coping, and this in time increase the length of a work, so that of two

manuscripts of the same book, one shorter than the other, the shorter is generally the older. As I have said, Marcion's Gospel was the shorter. The charge has been made that Marcion purposefully mutilated Paul's Epistles and Luke's Gospel to suit his doctrinal needs. It originated with Irenaeus, and was repeated with great violence by Tertullian and Epiphanius, and has been reiterated by theologians ever since, until very recently orthodoxy itself began to admit that it is not true (Davidson, Intro. N.T., ii. 517). So far from Marcion being a "heretic," he included in his canonical list all that he considered to be genuine Christian books (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 311), and he gives indications of having been a much more careful scholar than his accusers. **This is the irony of redactionist history by those who come to power and rewrite history to their own liking.** The Epistle which we now call "to the Ephesians" Marcion called "to the Laodiceans" and prided himself on restoring its true name (Tert. Adv. Marc., x. 17). He omitted from his Gospel the parable of the prodigal son (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 312), and from the Epistle to the Romans chapters 9-11 as well as the last two chapters (Origen, Comm. In Rom., xvi. 25), **either because they were not there in his time,** or because he was satisfied they were interpolations. Either way they were to be rejected. That means, Paul did not write them, because Marcion being pro-Pauline, would have included them for his advantage against the Jews if they existed. That also means that favorite memorized passage by most Christians, Romans 9:10-11 was not in the earliest Romans and never written by Paul:

### **Rom 10:9-11**

*9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (KJV)*

The passages were simply not in the original Romans in 150 A.D.!

*Take a minute and let that sink in. This "easy believeism" and be saved passage was never in the original Romans written by Paul? So, who added it later? Are we believing doctrines that God never gave us or spoke? Does this bother you?*

## **EXAMINING THE CHARGES AGAINST MARCION**

Understand that Marcion has to be called a heretic today, or else we might seriously investigate his New Testament, or the omissions in it which we think today are given by God and which we live by instead of the Torah! THINK! One only needs to read Tertullian and see how he blasts Marcion. So again, the Catholics are right. Might makes right; it has for a long time. It will soon be time for the Catholic Church to fill in the blanks of Marcion's New Testament. Their anti-Semitic doctrines will become New Testament Scripture in less than fifty years from Marcion's New Testament. So understand, when you pick up an old history book or a current theology book, like I did in Seminary, and read that "so and so" is a "heretic," don't be surprised and understand that most likely they had the "truth" once. You need to read and study to see for yourself. Dear ones, "orthodoxy today" is "unorthodoxy in the first century;" and "unorthodoxy today" is quite often found to be the beliefs of Jesus and the original church. May God forgive us for changing and then neglecting His true Word; the Jewish Palestinian Masoretic Text...the Tanakh. Now before you say you have it in your Old Testament in your Christian Bible, you need to set down for this. It is a blatant and purposeful mistranslation full of hundreds of misquotations affecting doctrine which was done by Greek-Jews of Phythagorean/Buddhist persuasion in the second century B.C.E. More on that elsewhere in this web-site. You need to see the evidence for yourself. I have and provide it for you. It is time to get back to the Bible Jesus used!

Some of the illustrations of the charges against Marcion will indicate their worthlessness character. In Seminary we were enamored with the early Church Fathers. When their names came up you could hear the "oohs" from those who revered them, yet had never read them. At one time that was me included. Such is power of tradition! Well, a lot of time and little reading will enlighten the blind!



We trust these men's doctrines and their writings; all the while believing they knew what they were doing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Tertullian will do great damage to Marcion in his writings. He will almost single-handedly convict Marcion for all time of editing "out" much of the "supposed existing New Testament." Tertullian (220 A.D.) says Marcion eliminated from Luke's Gospel the sayings of Jesus that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill (Adv. Marcion, iv. 7).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you see a problem with that?

That passage is not in Luke, but in Matthew (Matt. 5:17), yet Tertullian actually repeats this charge on three subsequent occasions (Adv. Marcion, iv. 2, iv.12, iv. 36). Maybe Tertullian should read the Gospels before he comments on them or corrects another about them. Tertullian goes on to say that Marcion must have expunged "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to the dogs" (Ibid., iv. 7). These also are not in Luke, but in Matthew (Matt. 15:24-26). **The charge that he mutilated the canonical list, and those books which he accepted, will not stand.**

There is another noteworthy thing to note: **No writer before Marcion's time makes mention of the Gospel according to Luke, and no writer after him does so till Irenaeus, nearly fifty years later. These are the facts.**

Many think these facts are sufficient to give ground for suspicion that some one after Marcion took Marcion's "unnamed Gospel" and forged Luke's name to it. Yep! You will have to decide for yourself.



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## THE INFLUENCE OF IRENAEUS UPON THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Irenaeus was the true founder of the New Testament canon. His date is from 180 to 200 A.D. Understand that before Irenaeus we find no mention of the Gospels by name by those who quote or reference passages which would later be included in them. Of our Gospels Luke was probably compiled or written about 170 A.D., Mark about 175 A.D., John about 178 A.D., and Matthew about 180 A.D. Irenaeus began to use them within a very short time after their origin, though it was probably not until the year 200 A.D. that he knew of them all. He used them exclusively, and his canon consisted of the Four Gospels, Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul (rejected Hebrews), First John, and Revelation (Davidson, The Canon Of The Bible, p. 138). In an appendix he placed as of less authority, Second John, First Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, 138). The Epistle to the Hebrews, Jude, James, Second Peter and Third John he ignored (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 138). You should take note that this is the first time we meet with anything like a recognition of our present canon: and Irenaeus rejected several books which we not call divine. As he is the earliest writer to mention the Four Gospels, orthodox theologians now assert that they must have been in use before, and recognized as sources of authority; because, they say, it would not have been possible if, as unbelievers assert, other Gospels had been in use before, to discard those others that to substitute a new series in their place. Ha! The reply to this is, that it was not only possible, but it is what occurred, as history testifies. Long before we received the "Four Gospels" hundreds of different "gospels" were in wide circulation through the empire. The intense rivalry between the different sects in the first two centuries, and especially between the Paulines, the Petrines, and the Johannines, had taught them that neither could master the other, and neither could hold exclusively to its sacred books, and insist on their adoption. The result was compromise, just as in a presidential convention, when the friends of the leading candidates find that neither of the favorites can be nominated, they unite on an entirely new man, one who before has hardly been mentioned. The Catholic Church was just forming (about 170 C.E.), by the union of the small sects and churches into one great body, and the necessity of some written source of authority, of a Bible recognized by all, was apparent; and it was this need which formed the canon (Davidson, The Canon Of The Bible, p. 134, 136, 164). The old books were discarded or suppressed, and the new ones took their place. In case you missed, it political necessity was the reason for the New Testament; to give credibility and authority for the new religion what was to go by the name of Jesus which would be centered in Rome. Sounds like God to me!

Previously no two sects had used entirely the same books, and many used only one; and this was true even for a long time after our Four Gospels came into use, and after the effort was made to form one universal canon. Diversity and confliction doctrines and dogma was everywhere. The Holy Spirit really had a problem to deal with. But did he?

## CANONS, CANONS EVERYWHERE

Thus the Ebionites (Iren., Adv. Her. 1.26) and the Cerinthians (Epiph., Her., xxvii, 5; xxx, 3, 14) used only the



St. Matthew; the Cordonians only Marcion's Gospel (Pseudo-Tert. Adv. Om. Her., vi). The Marcionites used, of course, only their own Gospel. The Theodotians rejected St. John, as did also the Alogi (Blunt, "Dictionary of Sects," Alogi); and the Petrine Christians naturally preferred Mark's Gospel, which was Petrine (Tert. Adv. Marc., iv. 5), just as the Paulists preferred Luke, which favored Paul (Tert. Adv. Marc., iv. 5). **In the midst of these facts church strength could come only in union and in the adoption of books which should be acceptable to all.** Unity was necessary at all costs. That the New Testament is such a compromise its contents attest to the critical eye (or should at least if you read deeply and with a critical eye). The Gospel according to Matthew is Petrine, it being there that Jesus is represented as saying to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Mark is also Petrine and Luke is Pauline, as the early Christian Fathers testify (Tert. Adv. Marc., iv. 5). The Epistles of Peter are Petrine, the Epistles of Paul are Pauline, and the Gospel according to John, the Epistles of John, and Revelation are, of course, Johannine. You should take note that history at this time records the suppression of the old Gospels and the substitution of the new.

Thus, Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (190 A.D.), while on a visit to the church of Rnossus, in Cilicia, found them using the Gospel of Peter. Being appealed to, he permitted them to read it, notwithstanding the controversies it produced. Later he wrote: "But when I came to you I had supposed that all held to the true faith; and as I had not perused the Gospel presented by them under the name of Peter, I said, 'If this be the only thing that creates difference among you, let it be read.' But now having understood, from what was said to me, that their minds were enveloped in some heresy, I will make haste to come to you again" (Euseb., Ecc. Hist., vi. 12). Eusebius has preserved this extract, and though he does not say in so many words that the Gospel was suppressed, he intimates it, and it is conceded by eminent writers that that was done (Lost and Hostile Gospels, S. B. Gould, p. 245).

## THE TESTIMONY FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY

Again, early in the fifth century there was a man named Theodoret who was actively engaged in superintending the establishment of churches. In his travels he found the Diatessaron, or Gospel of Tatian, in used in orthodox churches, and he wrote:

*"I found also myself more than two hundred such books in our churches which had been received with respect; and having gathered all together, I caused them to be laid aside, and introduced in their place the Gospels of the Four Evangelists" (Theod. Haeret. Fab., i. 20).*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that in the fifth century he refers to "churches" (plural) which, in place of the Four Gospels we are acquainted with as if written by the Apostles, had hundreds of others? Is there a message from God in these that the earliest believes understood that we have been deprived of today?

These churches had over two hundred different books and gospels which we don't have at present and were content with reading them instead of what we have today

**Answer for yourself:** What does that tell you? Evidently the Holy Spirit had not witnessed to them as well as thousands and thousands of others that they needed "new books" and were missing the only "four" gospels that really mattered! Oh by the way, they also had the Bible Jesus used....the Old Testament!!!!

As late as the fifth century one whose commission was the oversight and establishment of churches makes mention that there were over two hundred competing gospels accepted by the churches (plural) and they were at this time without the Four Gospels we think were from the beginning of the Apostolic movement. **We could not be further wrong in our beliefs about the acceptance of the Canon even as late as the fifth century. Evidently the Holy Spirit had not witnessed this to all as of yet as we suppose!**

**Answer for yourself:** Were these people "saved" without this New Testament message from these "new" books which we feel preach is crucial for salvation?

Dr. Westcott says that "from this statement it is clear that the Diatessaron was so orthodox as to enjoy a wide ecclesiastical popularity" (Westcott, Canon, p. 320).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you church read or study from the Diatessaron last Sunday as the early churches did?

The fact of displacement is also recognized by Prof. Davidson:

*"Not until the latter half of the second century did the present Gospels assume a canonical position, superceding other works of a similar character, and receiving a divine authority"*  
(Davidson, *Intro N. T.*, ii. 520).

I should be quick to add such authority was attested to those who promoted these "Four Gospels" over all others which were then accepted and read in the vast majority of churches at that time. There was no standard at this time for everyone decided what was to be accepted as "divine oracles" and this varied by location and city. Everyone and every group was an authority unto themselves.

When, therefore, the orthodox clergy asks if it were possible that other Gospels could have been long in use in the early church and then have been suppressed and succeeded by our present Gospels, the reply is, "That is exactly what occurred."

## WHY FOUR GOSPELS.....?

**Answer for yourself:** But why should there be just four Gospel? Why not five, or six, or a dozen, or a hundred?

Irenaeus, who was, as I have said, the real founder of the canon, and who spent his life in endeavoring to establish the Catholic Church and the New Testament determined this matter for all, and the church has followed one man and his decision in this matter. Whatever reason he gives, therefore, for the present number of Gospels, will be the reason why we have that number. Fortunately, he is very explicit on this point, and we know exactly what decided him. As you read his answer again I wish to prompt you to ask yourself is this sound like the work of the Holy Spirit in determining for the church for all time the number of Gospels.

Believe it or not, Irenaeus said that there was four quarters on the earth, and four universal winds (north, south, east, west), and that animals were four-legged, or four-formed, and therefore there should be four Gospels. His words are exactly on this matter:

*"It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four quarters of the earth in which we live, and four universal winds, while the church is scattered throughout all the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the church is the gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh....Therefore the gospels are in accord with these things...For the living creatures are quadriform and the gospel is quadriform...These things being so, all who destroy the form of the gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those (I mean) who represent the aspects of the gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer"* (Adv. Haer., iii. x. 8 & 9).

**Answer for yourself:** Do you now feel comforted in knowing that the Holy Spirit led Irenaeus to determine for all mankind the number of the Gospels of Divine revelation in relation to the number of feet that animals possess?

**Answer for yourself:** What if the wind was not out of the South but South-East...could we add another Gospel?

**And Irenaeus has the audacity himself to call us "unlearned." That is like the pot calling the kettle**



**black. It has never ceased to amaze me as to the superstition and darkness possessed by those who today are revered as spiritual giants like the early Gentile Church Father are in many circles. The more you read them and how they conflicted and disagreed with each other it is almost impossible to find the Holy Spirit's tracks in anything they did. A quick look at the doctrines they created that run parallel to their Council which determined the Canon is an eye-opening exercise to say the least. After reading the doctrines the these men created that run parallel with their selection of the Canon one find it almost to incredible to believe the Holy Spirit could have led them into all truth concerning the Canon but at the same time led them to develop and create blasphemous religious doctrines which Jesus neither believed nor his hand-picked followers taught.**

**There is no sadder spectacle in the intellectual world, than that of men possessed of really great mental possibilities, frittering away their time and their self respect in trying to make a superstition appear reasonable by explaining its absurdities in an illogical manner such as Irenaeus just did. He would have been better served by walking in the dignity of rational intellectualism rather than staggering alone in a blind stupor propelled by ignorant mysticism.**

**Those modern theologians who quote Irenaeus as a learned and great man, do not take kindly to his argument for the number of the Gospels; nor to the fact that he said that the ministry of Jesus lasted twenty years (*Ibid.*, ii. 22). And at the same time he was endeavoring to establish as of divine authority Gospels which said that Jesus' ministry lasted but three years?**

**Answer for yourself:** Was the Holy Spirit asleep in Irenaeus' case? Can we believe anything he said?

**We will pick up study concerning the formation of the Canon of the New Testament with the Muratorian Canon in the next article.**



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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE THIRD CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (210 A.D.)

Clement of Alexandria who lived in the early third century placed in his deutero-canon, as having inferior authority, Hebrews, Second John, Jude, which are not in the Bible, and the Revelation of Peter but not the Revelation of John. He also included the Shepherd of Hermas, the First Epistle of Clement, the Second Epistle of Clement, and the Epistle of Barnabas (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 139), which are not in the Bible. He thus placed the Epistle to the Hebrews, Second John and Jude, which are not in the Bible, on a level with the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas, which are not in the New Testament today. He recognized no distinct canon as of supreme authority (Ibid., 116), and he did not attach our idea of "uncanonical" as opposed to "canonical" to either of the Four Gospels or to any other books of the New Testament (Ibid., 139). Let us take time to see other information concerning [Clement of Alexandria](#) which helps explain his theological positions today in his writings and which explain his deviation from the "faith of the Jewish church."

## TERTULLIAN (220 A.D.)

Tertullian included in his canon the Four Gospels, Acts, Epistles of Paul, First John, and Revelation (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 139). He placed in an appendix, as not authoritative, Hebrews, Jude, Second John, and First Peter (Ibid., p. 139), which are in the Bible now, and the Shepherd of Hermas, which is not; and he said nothing of James, Second Peter and Third John (Ibid., p. 139), which today are in the canon. Notice he is not in agreement with the Muratorian Canon established twenty years or more before his time. Again, every man was a "canon" unto himself.

## THE PESHITO...OR PESHITTA

The Peshitta, that is, the "simple" (translation). This version has had such a complex literary history that its origin has long been a matter of debate. As far back as it can be traced, it has been a Christian version, since it contains the NT as well as the OT, and the extant copies of it have come from Christian hands. Yet the OT shows such a strong Jewish influence that many scholars hold that it was, at least in part, of Jewish origin, though some explain it as of Jewish-Christian origin. It may have been produced at Edessa, though Kahle states that it came from the region of Adiabene, lying east of the Tigris, where King Isates and his mother Helena became Jewish proselytes in the 1st cent. a.d. There are passages in the OT that are little more than transliterations of western Aramaic Targums into the Syriac script. **While the text agrees in the main with the Masoretic Hebrew, it seems to have been revised on the basis of the LXX.** Originally this Syriac version lacked Chr, Ezr, Neh, and Est, as well as the Apocrypha, all of which were added at a later date. The most valuable Syriac manuscript is the Codex Ambrosianus from about the 6th cent., now in Milan. A manuscript of Gen, Ex, Num, and Deut, from the monastery of St. Mary Deipara in Egypt, bears a date



corresponding to a.d. 464, and is thus the oldest copy of the Bible in any language bearing a definite date

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Peshitta (Syriac: "simple," or "common") is the Syriac version of the Bible, the accepted Bible of Syrian Christian churches from the end of the 3rd century AD. The name Peshitta was first employed by Moses bar Kepha in the 9th century to suggest (as does the name of the Latin Vulgate) that the text was in common use. The name also may have been employed in contradistinction to the more complex Syro-Hexaplar version. Of the vernacular versions of the Bible, the Old Testament Peshitta is second only to the Greek Septuagint in antiquity, dating from probably the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The earliest parts in Old Syriac are thought to have been translated from Hebrew or Aramaic texts by Jewish Christians at Edessa, although the Old Testament Peshitta was later revised according to Greek textual principles. The earliest extant versions of the New Testament Peshitta date to the 5th century AD and exclude The Second Letter of Peter, The Second Letter of John, the Third Letter of John, The Letter of Jude, and The Revelation to John, which were not canonical in the Syrian church.

Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 139, also attests that the Peshito, the Bible of Ancient Syriac Christians, omitted Second Peter, Second John, Third John, Jude, and Revelation, all of which are not in our Bible (Ibid., 146).

## THE OLD LATIN VERSION

The Old Latin. The Latin rendering of the Bible probably originated in North Africa as early as a.d. 150. It is even possible that the Christians of North Africa adopted a translation of the OT from Latin-speaking Jews. Tertullian (c. a.d. 160 – c. 230) knew the Old Latin Bible at least in part, and Cyprian (c. 200–258), bishop of Carthage, quotes frequently from both Testaments of this Bible. Only fragments of the Old Latin of the OT have survived. Several of the Apochryphal books were incorporated unrevised into the Vulgate. As for the rest of The Bible, scholars have been able to piece together manuscript fragments covering a considerable portion of the OT. These, together with quotations in the early Latin Fathers, are our sources for the reconstruction of the Old Latin text of the OT. Scholars distinguish 2 types of text: the African and the European. The Old Latin of the OT was made from the Greek LXX, and its chief value today is as an aid in recovering the text of the LXX as it was before Origen's revision of it.

What is important for us to notice is that the Old Latin version, the Bible of the early African Church, omitted the Epistle to the Hebrews, Second Peter, and James. The Epistle to the Hebrews was added subsequently as an anonymous book (Westcott, On The Canon of the New Testament, p. 254). Again we see no unity or agreement with those who came before and their "opinions" as to what was "God-breathed."

## THE ABYSSINIAN CHURCH AND ITS CANON

The Abyssinian Church was a church that believed in "monophysitism." This was a Christian schismatic sect of the 5th and 6th centuries that maintained that Christ had only one (divine) nature, thereby opposing the orthodox doctrine that he was both divine and human. The Monophysites were mainly confined to the Eastern church and gained little strength in the West. At the directive of Pope Leo I, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 attempted to steer a middle course between the orthodox and Monophysite views. The resulting edict did not satisfy the Monophysites, and the controversy continued, the Monophysites being supported by the Copts and the Eutychian sect. The Eastern church, in an effort to suppress the heresy, in the first half of the 6th century excommunicated the Monophysites, who thereupon formally seceded from the parent church. The Monophysites split into two factions over controversies regarding the incorruptibility of Christ's body. After 560 a third faction, the Tritheists, arose; they interpreted the three persons of the Deity as three separate gods and hence were regarded by the other factions as heretics. In Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia the Monophysite congregations remained strong throughout the controversy. Although finally condemned in 680-81, at the sixth ecumenical council, Monophysitism continues in some churches to this day. The modern Abyssinian church, Armenian church, Coptic church, and Jacobite church are all Monophysitic bodies.

The Canon of the Abyssinian Church included at first, Enoch (of course since it taught an Angel-Messiah and

not a human messiah), Fourth Esdras, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Jubilees, and Asseneth (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 206), books which are not now in the Bible and of several of which the world now never hears. The list was changed frequently, and many books were eliminated or inserted, but, generally speaking, it contained Judith, Tobit, First Maccabees, Second Maccabees, Wisdom of Jesus, Wisdom of Solomon, and even a book called the Apocalypse of Isaiah (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 206), none of which are not in our Bible.

## UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT...AND ITS CANONS

The Bibles of upper and lower Egypt are called "Coptic" as in the Coptic New Testaments. Of some 5 known Coptic versions, the most important are the Sahidic and the Bohairic.

### (1) The Sahidic.

This version is the older version and was used in Southern (Upper) Egypt. It was formerly designated Thebaic, after the city of Thebes. Only fragments of this version are extant, but these fragments are of sufficient quantity to reconstruct the major part of the NT. The earliest manuscripts originate from the 4th cent. a.d..

### (2) The Bohairic.

This version was current in Northern (Lower) Egypt and eventually replaced the other dialects. It is the Coptic used to this day in the church services, and the complete NT has been preserved in it. Both the Sahidic and Bohairic versions of the NT contain principally an **Alexandrian** (again we find the Alexandrian influence) type of text, similar to a text such as is found in the Codex Vaticanus.

The two canonical lists of upper and lower Egypt, called the Thebaic version, or version of Thebes, and the Memphitic version, or the version of Memphis, omitted Revelation (Westcott, On The Canon Of The New Testament, p. 266).

## ORIGEN

Origen (250 A.D.) included in his Old Testament list the Epistles of Jeremiah, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees, which are not in our Bible, and he makes no mention of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, which are in our Bible (Euseb., Eccl. History, vi. 25). The omission of these twelve books is very singular, and Rufinus' Latin version (400 A.D.) kindly inserts them. Even if they were omitted by mistake, the error shows how careless and indifferent the Fathers were in stating what books were in the Bible. Origen did not formulate a consecutive list of the New Testament books, but passages gathered here and there from his works indicate what his opinion was (Ibid., 261). He apparently divided the New Testament books into three classes, authentic, unauthentic, and uncertain. The first included the Four Gospels, Acts, fourteen Epistles of Paul, First Peter, First John, and the Revelation of John. The second included the Shepherd of Hermas, thought he was rather inclined to place it in a higher class, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Acts of Paul, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Egyptians, and the Preaching of Peter (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 146). The third class included the Epistles of James, Jude, Second Peter, Second John, and Third John (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 146), all of which are in the Bible today.

As you can see again over the next one hundred years there was little unity or agreement on "what" was the Word of God among the early Church. Now, let us continue.





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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE FOURTH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## EUSEBIUS

Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian (340 A.D.), divided the books of the New Testament into three classes, the "acknowledged," the "disputed," and the "heretical" (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., iii. 25). The "acknowledged" books included the Four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul (omitting Hebrews), First John, and First Peter. They were the books concerning which there was no controversy. The "disputed" books he divided into two subordinate classes; the "generally known and recognized by most," namely, James, Jude, Second Peter, Second John, and Third John., none of which are disputed now, so far as the laity ever hears; and the "spurious," including the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Revelation of John, which last is in the Bible today, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews. The "heretical" books included the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Matthew (not the one now in the Bible), the Acts of the Apostles by Andrew, and the Acts of the Apostles by John. The Epistle of James, which is not in the Bible and which he here classes as generally recognized, in another place he calls "spurious" (Euseb., Eccl. Hist., ii. 25), and of Revelation he says that possibly it should be among the acknowledged books, but that some rejected it. The idea as to what composed the Bible was in the minds of the Fathers vague and indefinite. Such a strict and unalterable rule as we now have they did not possess. Eusebius was a bishop of the Eastern church, and the reader will observe as we progress that the church uniformly discarded Revelation.

## CYRIL, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM

Cyril, the Bishop of Jerusalem (356 A.D.), is a member of the Eastern church, made a catalogue which included the books now in our New Testament except Revelation, and he adds, "But let all the rest be excluded. And all the books which are not read in the churches, neither do thou read by thyself" (Catech. Lect., iv. 35).

## THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA...[150 YEARS LATER...LOCAL BUT NOT GENERAL AUTHORITY]

More than three hundred and fifty years passed away, and it became apparent that the Fathers could not agree as to what books should be in the Bible, and councils began to deal with the matter. The first Christian assembly at which the canon was made the subject of a special ordinance was held at Laodicea in 365 A.D. Tertullian indeed mentions the fact that synods had acted upon the canonicity of books in his time (Dr. Pudic, 10), but their authority much have been local and not general. Jerome also says that the council of Nicea included Judith in a list which it adopted (Pref. In Judith, i. p. 1169, Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 171), but I can find no good evidence that the council of Nicea acted on the canon at all, although there is a very

general impression that it did. The current tradition is that the books were placed under a table at Nicea, and that after prayer the canonical ones leaped out from under, and the others remained behind. It is said that this story is told by Pappus, a Lutheran divine (1549-1601) in his "Epitome Historiae Ecclesiasticae de Conversionibus Gentium," etc. It is, of course, fabulous, and probably originated from the fact that at the council of Chalcedon the Gospels were placed in the midst of the assembly (Westcott, Canon, 426).

The synod of Laodicea was not a general council of the church, but its list was afterwards adopted by the church, so that virtually that was the first general action on the contents of the Bible. It was a gathering of twenty-four to thirty-two (the number is variously stated) of the clergy of Lydia and Phrygia. Whatever the number, the so-called heretics had a majority of the votes present (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 173). Its decree was as follows:

"Psalms composed by private men must not be read in the church, nor uncanonical books, but only the canonical books of the New and Old Testament. How many books must be read::

Then follows the list as we have it today, except the omission of Revelation. This council is of importance because for the first time the tone of authority as to what must and must not be read is established.

## ATHANASIUS

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, (365 A.D.), was at enmity with Eusebius and the clergy of Laodicea (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 234), and when Laodicea declared that Revelation was not in the Bible, Athanasius immediately promulgated a list in which he declared that it was. In his canon he names, he says, the books in which alone were proclaimed the doctrines of godliness, and which no man must take from, and no man add to. Yet he omitted Esther, which the church has since added, and he also inserted Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah, which the church has since taken away (Athanasius, Festal Epistle XXXIX, Liberty Of The Fathers, Oxford, 1954). He expressly declare that Esther was not a part of the Bible, and place it on a level with the Pastor Of Hermas, and a book called The Doctrine of the Apostles. He closed by saying: "Let there be no mention of apocryphal writings." He had become tired of the controversy.

## AMPHILOCHIUS, BISHOP OF ICONIUM 365 A.D.

Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium (365 A.D.), in his New Testament, accepts the Four Gospels, Acts, and fourteen Epistles of Paul, and adds, "But some maintain that the Epistle to the Hebrews is spurious; not speaking well, for the grace is genuine. To proceed: What remains? Of the Catholic Epistles some maintain that we ought to receive seven, and others three only, one of James, and one of Peter, and one of John...The Revelation of John again some reckon among (the scriptures); but still the majority say that it is spurious. This will be the most truthful canon of the inspired scriptures" (Lambi ad Seleucam). One cannot decide from the above what he considered "the most truthful canon," but it shows again how entirely unsettled was the question as to what was to be considered the New Testament and what was not, and that the question was purely a matter of individual opinion. His closing words show that in his time no list was universally accepted.

## OPATATUS, OF MELA (370 A.D.)

Opatatus of Mela omitted Hebrews (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 193)

## GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS (389 A.D.)

Gregory of Nazianzus (389 A.D.), gave as the New Testament the Four Gospels, the Acts, fourteen Epistles of Paul, and the seven Catholic Epistles, and he adds, "In these you have all the inspired books; if there be any book besides these, it is not among the genuine (scriptures)" (Carm., xii. 31). He belonged to the Eastern church, and he likewise rejected the book of Revelation.



By the "seven Catholic Epistles" is meant always James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, and Jude. Why they are called Catholic Epistles no one knows (Kitto, Cyclo. Bio. Literature, "Epistles, Catholic,"). Any explanation of the name is an assumption.

## **ST. AUGUSTINE (390 A.D.)**

St. Augustine's New Testament was the same as ours today. Now we begin to see conformity. The influence of St. Augustine in establishing the Bible was greater probably than any other Father or than any council. People now attribute to God what was really the work of one man. While councils decided upon the canon, and their decision became embodied sentiment of the entire church, the expression was really that of but one man, the leader in the council, and when doubts arose as to the authority of a book, scholarship was not involved to decide it, for the members possessed almost none. They simply asked: "What did the Early Fathers say of it?" Prof. Davidson says:

"In relation to the New Testament, the synods which drew up lists of the sacred books show the opinion of some leading Father like Augustine, along with what custom had sanctioned. In this department no member of the synod exercised his critical faculty; a number together would decide such questions summarily. Bishops proceeded in the track of tradition or authority" (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 172).

In 393 A.D. a council met in Hippo, in Africa, discussed the canon, and adopted St. Augustine's list. St. Augustine himself was present, and was the ruling spirit.

In 397 A.D. was held the third council of Carthage. St. Augustine was again present. It adopted a decree as follows:

"It was also determined that besides the canonical scriptures, nothing be read in the church under the title of Divine Scriptures. The Canonical scriptures are these:"

Then follow the names of the books of the Bible as we have them now, except some variations in the order

## **DIDYMUS OF ALEXANDRIA (392 A.D.)**

Didymus of Alexandria tells us that Second Peter in his time was accounted spurious and was not in the canon, yet it was publicly read (Westcott, Canon, 444). In the early days books were read in the churches which were known at the time to be spurious and which were not in the canon. In time most of these books were to find their way into the New Testament. Today Second Peter is not only read in the churches, but is accounted genuine and is in the Bible. And if any modern orthodox minister, believing as the ancients did, that it was spurious, desired to say so, he would not dare to, since it would "unsettle the faith of his congregation." For this he would be dismissed, and his livelihood would cease as a minister and the support of his family through the ministry would stop. It is thus that ecclesiasticism compels men to play the hypocrite, and teach as true that they believe to be false. The same is done today; many times ministers know more than they let one and for the sake of their "check" play the party-line.

Let us continue.



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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE FIFTH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## ST. CHRYSOSTOM (407 A.D.)

St. Chrysostom (407 A.D.) did not use Second John, Third John, Second Peter, Jude, and Revelation (Westcott, Canon, p.438), all of which are in the Bible now. He included the Wisdom of Jesus (Westcott, Canon, p. 438), a book which is not now in the Bible.

## THEODORE, OF MOPSUESTA

He rejected the Epistle of James, Second Peter, Second John, Third John, Jude, and Revelation (Westcott, Canon, p. 438), all of which are now in the Bible.

## THEODORET, BISHOP OF CYRUS

He rejected Second John, Third John, Second Peter, Jude and Revelation (Ibid., note 2).

## MANUSCRIPTS OF THE GREEK BIBLE

There are three great manuscripts of the Greek Bible extant, the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrine. They are the high courts of appeal in all cases of disputed texts, and their lists are, therefore, very important.

The Sinaitic manuscript is one found by Tischendorf in a convent of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, in 1859, and is probably the oldest of the New Testament codices in existence, dating back to the fourth century. It has the Four Gospels, the Fourteen Epistles of Paul, Acts, the Seven Catholic Epistles, Revelation, the Epistle of Barnabas, and a part of the Shepherd of Hermas (Westcott, Canon, p. 426), the last two of which are not in the Bible now.

The Vatican manuscript, in the Vatican Library at Rome, belongs to the middle of the fourth century. ; It ends by mutilation at Hebrews 9:14. Up to that point it agrees substantially with the Alexandrine manuscript (Ibid., note 2). What other books it may have contained one cannot say.

The Alexandrine manuscript, belongs to the fifth century, and written probably in Egypt, included in the New Testament the two Epistles of Clement (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p.10; Westcott, Canon, p. 544), none of which are in our Bibles at present.

## CLERMONT CODEX



The Clermont Codex is a Latin manuscript now in the Imperial Library at Paris, and dating from the fifth to the eighth century, contains a list of the books read in the African Church in the third century (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 145). The New Testament omits Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Second Thessalonians, which are not in the Bible, and inserts the Shepherd of Hermas, the Acts of Paul, and the Revelation of Peter, which are not now in it (Westcott, Canon, 555). The Epistle which is now called "to the Hebrews" is there called the Epistle to Barnabas (Ibid., 557).

In 419 A.D. another council was held at Carthage., and St. Augustine's list was again ratified (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 199)

## **ON THE CHURCH'S COUNCILS...WHAT YOU WERE NEVER TOLD**

The reader would err greatly did he suppose that in these assemblies one or two hundred gentlemen sat down to discuss quietly and dignifiedly the questions which had come before them for settlement. On the contrary, many of the bishops were ignorant ruffians, and were followed by crowds of vicious supporters who stood ready on the slightest excuse to maim and kill their opponents. The most shocking scenes that occur in the political conventions in the worst districts of our great cities and other nations are as nothing compared with what history tell us was common in these Christian councils. Dr. Phillip Schaff says:

"Together with abundant talents, attainments, and virtues, there were gathered also at the councils ignorance, intrigues, and partisan passions, which had already been excited on all sides by long controversies preceding and now met and arrayed themselves, as hostile armies, for open combat" (History of the Christian Church, by P Schaff, D.D., ii. 346).

Dear ones, this is who these supposed "Divine Revelations" were later canonized and today we are told the "Holy Spirit" decided for us what books were to be "authoritative" for faith and practice. It seems more likely "might made right!"

Dean Milman, the celebrated historian says:

"It might have been supposed that nowhere would Christianity appear in such commanding majesty as in a council, which should gather from all quarters of the world the most eminent prelates and the most distinguished clergy; that a lofty and serene piety would govern all their proceedings, and profound and dispassionate investigation exhaust every subject; that human passions and interest would stand rebuked before that awful assembly; that the sense of their own dignity as well as the desire of impressing their brethren with the solemnity and earnestness of their belief would at least exclude all intemperance of manner and language... History shows that melancholy reverse. Nowhere is Christianity less attractive, and if we look to the ordinary tone and character of the proceedings, less authoritative, than in the councils of the church. It is in general a fierce collision of two rival factions, neither of which will yield, each of which is solemnly pledged against conviction. Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority, decisions by wild acclamation rather than by sober inquiry, detract from the reverence, and impugn the judgments, at least of the later councils....rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary....the degeneracy is rapid from the council of Nicea to that of Ephesus, where each party came determined to use every means of haste, maneuver, court influence, bribery, to crush his adversary; where there was an encouragement of, if not an appeal to the violence of the populace, to anticipate the decrees of the council; where each had his own tumultuous foreign rabble to back his quarrel; and neither would scruple at any means to obtain the ratification of their anathemas through persecution by the evil government. (H.H. Milman, D.D., History of Latin Christianity, New York, 1871, p 226).

Gregory of Nazianzus, the Christian father, speaks of them as "assemblies of cranes and geese" (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, ii. 347). Utterly disgusted, he decline to have anything to do with them, saying:

"To tell the truth, I am inclined to shun every collection of bishops, because I have never yet seen that a synod came to a good end, or abated evils instead of increasing them. For in those assemblies (and I do not think I



express myself too strongly here) indescribable contentiousness and ambition prevail....Therefore I have withdrawn myself, and have found rest to my soul only in solitude" (Ep. Ad. Procop., 55 old order, Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 347).

The third general council of the church, which was held at Ephesus in 431 A.D., was marked by "shameful intrigue, uncharitable lust of condemnation, and coarse violence of conduct" (Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 348). Both factions came with armed escorts, as if going to battle (Ibid., ii. 723-725), and were followed by great mobs of the ignorant rabble, slaves and seamen, the lower populace of Constantinople, peasants, and bathmen, and hordes of women, prepared for violence; the city was patrolled by troops (Ibid., i. 242), and Nestorius and John of Antioch had armed body guards to protect them from the violence of Cyril's party (Ibid., p. 242). The two bands fought in the streets and much blood was shed (Ibid., p. 242). At the reading of the imperial decree such a tumult arose that all the contending bishops were ordered under arrest (Ibid., i. 242).

An effort was made immediately after to hold a council in Constantinople, and such was the fear of a riot that it had to be adjourned to the suburban district across the Bosphorus (Ibid., i. 242).

In August 449 A.D., there met in Ephesus a synod which occupies a notorious place in the scandals of church history, and which, from the fraud and violence by which everything was carried, and the odious character of its proceedings, has received the name of the "Robbers Council." Dioscorus presided with brutal violence (Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 738), protected by soldiers. The fear of personal injury was so great that Flavian and his friends, composing one faction, hardly dared to open their lips, while Theodoret was excluded entirely. A communication, presented from Eusebius, was received by the crown with cries of "Let Eusebius be burnt; let him be burned alive. As he has cut Christ in two, so let him be cut in two" (Ibid., p. 738). Three delegates from Rome were so terrified, that they did not venture to read an epistle which they bore from Leo (Ibid., p. 738 ff.). The subject of the canon was, of course, not the only one discussed by councils. In fact, in many councils it was not referred to. Dioscorus and his party wished Flavian and his friends to sign a confession of that that Christ had but one nature. Flavian refused to do so. At a given signal the doors were thrown open, a band of soldiers and an armed mob rushed in, and the terrified bishops of the Flavian party were compelled, by blows and at the point of the sword, to sign (Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., Bk. 2, Cent. 5, pt. 2, ch. v). Where before there had been two parties there was now not alone a majority, but almost unanimity (Milman, Hist. Latin. Christ., i. 288). The decree having been signed, Dioscorus was no longer able to control his anger, and he struck the vanquished Flavian (Ibid., i. 289). Thus encouraged, a crown of infuriated monks set upon the unfortunate bishop of Jerusalem, crying "Kill him! Kill him!" and they beat and kicked him, and inflicted such injuries that death ensued shortly after (Ibid., i. 289, Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 739). Dean Milman remarks, significantly, that this was not the last council defiled by blood (Milman, Hist. Latin. Christ., i. 289).

Another council, called to meet in Nicea in 451 A.D., was so unruly that it had to be summoned to Chalcedon, across the straits from Constantinople, where the emperor could reach it with his troops and compel order (Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 742). It is known as the Council of Chalcedon. The proceeding were continually interrupted by yells and tumult (Ibid., ii. 743), and even the laymen were compelled to remind the bishops of their clerical dignity (Ibid., ii. 743). "At Chalcedon," says Dr. Philip Schaff, "the introduction of the renowned expositor and historian Theodoret provoked a scene which almost involuntarily reminds us of the modern brawls of Greek and Roman monks at the holy sepulchre under the restraining influence of the Turkish police. Theodoret's Egyptian opponents shouted with all their might: 'Away with him, this teacher of Nestorius.' His friends replied with equal violence: 'They forced us (at the Robber Council) by blows to subscribe, away the Manichaeans, the enemies of Flavian, the enemies of the faith. Away with the murderer Dioscorus. Who does not know his wicked deeds?' The Egyptian bishops cried again: 'Away with the Jew, the adversary of God, and call him not bishop.' To which the original bishops answered: 'Away with the rioters, away with the murderers! The orthodox man belongs to the council.'" The military had to interfere to quell the proceedings (Schaff, Hist. Christ. Church, ii. 348).

At the council held at Constantinople in 785 A.D., the soldiery burst into the chamber and dispersed the affrighted bishops because they did not approve of the bishop's enactments (Milman, ii. p. 345); and the second council of Nicea (787 A.D.) denounced this council of Constantinople as a synod of fools and madmen (Ibid., ii.



346).

There is one curious fact to which I can not refrain from calling attention. No Christian historian, whether Mosheim, Milman, Schaff, or any other, has ever perceived, apparently, the grotesque absurdity of an assembly attempting to decide by vote a fact in the past. Men vote on questions which have yet to be decided, and thus make them facts; as whether this man or that man shall be president, or this law or that shall be in force; but not on those which are already decided. The reader needs to understand that this is just a small representation of the character of the Church councils. If one is honest with oneself then it is almost impossible to read these proceedings and pretend that the Holy Spirit had anything to do the the results of such violent proceedings let alone believe the decisions made as to what was "inspired" have any credibility whatsoever!

## JEROME

Jerome (420 A.D.) included in his New Testament Hebrews and Revelation on the authority of the ancient writers, and not of the existing custom (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 190 ff., showing that in his time these books were frequently rejected. That seems almost ridiculous in light of what you have learned by reading the above accounts. In another work he gave the Epistle of Barnabas at the end of a canonical list, and he expresses the doubts in existence to Philemon, Second Peter, Jude, Second John, and Third John (Davidson, p. 190 ff.), of which, today, no doubts are entertained. The First Epistle of Clement, which is not now in the Bible, was, he says, read in some churches ( ).

Jerome and St. Augustine were the men most influential in determining the canon of the New Testament (Davidson, Canon, p. 233). The Catholic Church has followed the latter, and Luther and the reformers followed the former. As to their qualifications for deciding the canon Prof. Davidson has said:

"Both were unfitted for critical examination of such a topic. Augustine was a gifted spiritual man, lacking learning and independence. Tradition dominated all his idea about the difficult or disputed books.....His judgment was weak, his sagacity moderate, and the absence of many-sidedness hindered a critical result. Jerome, again, was learned but timid, lacking the courage to face the question fairly or fundamentally and the independence necessary to its right investigation. Belonging as he did to both churches, he recommended the practice of one or the other. He, too, was chiefly influenced by tradition" (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 200).

## APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

The Apostolic Constitutions are a collection of rules, mainly for the guidance of the clergy. They date from the fifth century, and are not to be attributed to the Apostles, their names being another of the many similar endeavors to give authority to books by foreign great names to them. The canons in the Apostolic Constitutions (Apostolic Constitutions, II, 57) omit from the New Testament James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, Jude and Revelation (Ibid., VIII, xlvii. 85). This is the more remarkable from the fact that the canon prescribes with great particularity and minuteness how services in church should be conducted, and what books be read! It also omits Revelation, and included the First Epistle of Clement, the Second Epistle of Clement (an acknowledged forgery), and the Clementine Constitutions (Ibid.). No one ever hears of these books being included in the New Testament now. It is a noteworthy fact that this and the preceding list, contradictory as they are, are both in the same book no less!

It would seem to me than "any thinking believer" would have a hard time accepting the decisions of such men as shown about anything, but let us continue for we have yet much to share before we can draw any concrete conclusion.



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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE SIXTH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

This will be a very quite century regarding the Canon of the New Testament.

## **COSMOS INDICOPLEUSTES (535 A.D.)**

Cosmos Indicopleustes never mentions James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, Jude, or Revelation (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 200).

## **JUNILIUS, AN AFRICAN BISHOP (550 A.D.)**

Junilius divided the books of the Bible into three classifications: "Perfect, intermediate, and no authority." Ironically those he considered "perfect" contained the Wisdom of Jesus, which is not now in our Bibles. Those he considered "intermediates" contained the collection of James, Second Peter, Jude, Second John, and Third John, all of which we consider as authoritative as any. Within the classification of "no authority" he included the book of Revelation because it was doubted by man in the East (De. partibus divine legis, i. 2).

Let us continue.





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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE 7TH THRU THE 10TH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## THE SIXTH COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (629 A.D.)

By the year 629 A.D. so diverse and jumbled had become the views as to what was "God breathed" and "inspired" and "what should be in the New Testament and the Bible," and so great was the need of harmony and unity in these fractions sects which all had different documents to vouch for their authority or the authority of each "sect" against the other, that the sixth general council of Constantinople, otherwise know as the Quinisextine or Trullan council, with a desire apparently to please all parties, ratified the catalogues of Laodicea and Carthage, the Apostolic canons, and those of Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Amphilochius of Iconium, Cyril of Alexander, and every other one of which they had any knowledge, seemingly indifferent to the absurdity of indorsing the contradictions between them.

**Answer for yourself:** Cannot God decide what is or what is not to be included, and would he agree to multiple contradictions and call it "Divine"?

You need to understand that no two of these various "canons" were alike. It must be added that the Clementine Constitutions, though in the Apostolic catalogues, and recognized by the assembly as authoritative, were declared to be no longer canonical, on account of the interpolations which they had received (Westcott, Canon, p. 434).

One would think that after such a majestic gathering of the Church that all would be settled. No way! Men continued to disagree even after such a noble endeavor as the Sixth Council of Constantinople which "ratified and canonized everything even if it did conflict with itself."

**Answer for yourself:** Is this God's Word?

## THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF TOLEDO (632 A.D.)

At the fourth council of Toledo Augustine's list was again ratified (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 237).

## JOHANNES DAMASCENUS (750 A.D.)

Johannes Damascenus gives as the New Testament all the books now in it as well as the Apostolic Constitutions (De. Fide Orthodoxa, iv. 17).

## NICEPHORUS (810 A.D.)

Nicephorus excluded from the New Testament Revelation, and placed it on a level with the Revelation of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews (Westcott, Canon, p. 552).

## **PHOTIUS, CECUMENIUS AND THEOPHYLACT**

They all rejected Revelation (Ibid.).

## **ALFRIC, ABBOT OF CERNE (989 A.D.)**

He said that the Four Gospels should be included along with the Seven Catholic Epistles, fifteen Epistles of Paul including Hebrews and the Epistle to the Laodiceans, the Acts, and Revelation (Westcott, Canon, p. 452). The Epistle to the Laodiceans here mentioned has a curious history. Paul says in his Epistles to the Colossians (chap. 4:16) that he had written a letter to the the Laodiceans, and an Epistle claiming to be that one was in circulation in the second century (Westcott, Canon, p. 552). The one now under discussion, which is a different book from that one, begins as all the genuine Epistles do, "Paul, an apostle not of men, nor by-men, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren that be at Laodicea." etc. The earliest trace of it is at the beginning of the sixth century. Gregory the Great, at the close of that period, declare it was written by Paul. Haymo, Bishop of Halberstadt, (853 A.D.), did the same. So did John of Salisbury not long after. The opinion of Africa confirmed these, and the Epistle passed into the early translation of the New Testament. It is in the manuscript of the Vulgate Bible at La Cava. It is in the manuscript of the Latin New Testament which is still preserved at Fulda; in very many western manuscripts of the Bible, as in the great Gothic Bible of Toledo (8th century), in the Book of Armagh (807 A.D.), in the so-called Charlemagne's Bible of the British museum (9th century), in the great Bible of the king's library in the British museum, apparently designed for church use, and in many other magnificent Bibles. Fourteen editions of one or more German versions of it are said to have been printed before Luther's time; it is in the first Bohemian Bible (1488), and it is in the Albigensian Bible at Lyons, where it has its usual place after the Epistle to the Collosians (Westcott, Canon, p. 454).

From the sixth to the sixteenth century, a thousand years, this Epistle was in the Bible of a large share of the Christian people; and yet we now never hear of it, much less do we hear it called the "Word of God".

We are not through yet. Let us continue.





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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE 16TH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## REFORMATION & THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

For thirteen hundred years the church had been endeavoring to harmonize on a Bible by permitting the bishops and ecclesiastics to settle the matter generally among themselves, and it had resulted only in violent clashing of opinion. An ominous revolt was breaking out in the North. Luther was pushing the claim of the right of private judgment to its utmost. And as the Bible was the key of the situation, the church, which had been growing more and more restrictive and had thus accumulated precedent for its proposed step, took the whole questions of the canon in hand, fixed it once for all, and forbade any individual to have anything further to do with it.

The council of Trent met Dec. 13, 1545, and on Feb. 12, 1546, the question of the canon was brought forward. Luther had declared that the Bible alone was the source of authority. Luther declared that the universally accepted books of the Old and New Testament, without any of the apocryphal or disputed books, should alone constitute the Bible. The church wanted the apocrypha admitted. The questions were discussed in the council by about thirty ecclesiastics in four sessions. For the second time in the history of the book came a compromise. Four fractions were contending for the adoption of different views. All were agreed that tradition, hearsay, and rumor was of equal authority with written records. The grotesque misnomer of calling such men "great," or "scholars," is quite apparent. On the subject concerning which there should have been division, there was unity; and on the one on which there should have been unity; there was division. One party desired two classes of books, St. Augustine had divided them, the canonical and the uncanonical; the second party desired three classes, the acknowledged books, the disputed books of the New Testament, and the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, in each case, of course, the uncanonical books to be thrown out; the third party desired the list simply to be named without anything being said as to the authority of the books, as had been done at the third council of Carthage; and the fourth party demanded that all the books, acknowledged, disputed, and apocryphal, should be classed together, and the whole called of divine authority. As is generally the case in a religious council where "spiritual insight" is permitted to rule, stupidity gained the day. The first and second parties combined about March 8th, but notwithstanding this, on the 15th the third party secured a majority, and the following decree was adopted:

" The holy ecumenical and general council of Trent,...following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates all the books of the Old and New Testaments, ...and also traditions pertaining to faith and conduct,...with an equal feeling of devotion and reverence...The synod though proper, therefore, to annex to this decree a catalogue of the sacred books, lest any doubt might arise concerning those that were approved of. They are the following: [Then are given the names of the books exactly as they stand in the Catholic Bible today, and the decree proceeds.] Now, if any one reading these books in all their parts, as they are usually read in the Latin Vulgate edition, does not hold them for sacred and canonical [observe "canonical," not "inspired"] and, knowing the aforesaid traditions, does industriously condemn them, let him be anathema" (Westcott, Canon, p. 472; Schaff's Creeeds of Christendom, ii. p. 79).

**This is where the doctrine originated that we must believe the New Testament or be damned. More than one thousand five hundred years after Jesus Christ was crucified, the superstition arose. And the Catholic Church does not yet insist on inspirations, for it hold to the authority of tradition, and gossip and inspiration do not always agree. But who were the men that established this damnation theory of the Bible?**

**"This fatal decree, in which the council, harassed by the fear of lay critics and 'grammarians,' gave a new aspect to the whole question of the canon, was ratified by 53 prelates, among whom were not ...one scholar distinguished for historical learning, not one who was fitted by special study, for the examination of a subject in which the truth could alone be determined by the voice of antiquity" (Westcott, Canon, p. 474).**

**That was the character of the men who said that their work was the work of God. For, let us remember, the books in the Catholic Bible are not what God said should be there but what these men said should be. God had nothing to do with it! Furthermore, this was the first time in the history of the church that anything which had been before simply a matter of custom and opinion, was made a belief to be accepted on pain of eternal damnation (Ibid.), and it has been the unfortunate parent of a most numerous and hideous progeny. Having once a precedent for declaring endless punishment a penalty for non-belief in dogmas not taught in the Bible, a whole brood of superstitions followed and have been current to this day.**

**This practically settled the question of the canon in the Catholic Church (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 237). A few men, later, protested, and endeavored to revise the list (Westcott, Canon, p. 475), but the struggle was useless.**

**What I find amazing is that the absurdity of the Eastern Church, which had for one thousand three hundred years declared persistently that the book of Revelation was not written by John and was not entitled to a place in the Bible, wheeled squarely about, and in a council held in Jerusalem in 1672 A.D., adopted the decree of Trent (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 246). Today the Eastern Church considers Revelation as much the word of God as any other book (Westcott, Canon, p. 487).**

## **THE WORSHIP OF A BOOK...INSTEAD OF GOD**

**The Protestant Church today is a book-worshipper. It makes a fetich out of a book. The Catholics are little for the Bible, and ever have. The say, "Take away the whole book if you like, and the church will still remain in all its power. The book is the creation of the church, not the church the creation of the book." The Protestants, finding themselves confronted with an infallible church, had to oppose it with an infallible book. And they made a book infallible, which before had not been considered so. And well they might for they were compelled to. It is commonly the case that the overthrow of one superstition is only accomplished by the establishment of another in its place. The Catholics had the prestige of antiquity, and of being considered the only true Church of God, and they threatened with eternal damnation every man who followed Luther. The masses of the people of the North, ignorant and superstitious, were naturally terrified by the awful threat, and the only wonder is that they ever challenged this religious juggernaut. To meet the challenge, Luther, Calvin, and others said that the Bible was "supernaturally inspired." The origin of the books having been forgotten (as most Christians today do not possess such knowledge as well), men, credulous and in trouble, came to think that because the books were written of God they were written by God. The reformers declared that the Bible and not the church was the sole source of authority. This succeeded, and the decrees of the Vatican were answered by such reasoning by the Protestants. The doctrine of the divine and infallible inspiration of the New Testament spread as did the military advances through Europe.**

**That this is so, and that the idea arose with men who were deluded, is illustrated by the following ridiculous decree, adopted by the Calvinistic council of Switzerland in 1675 A. D.:**

**"Almighty God not only provided that His word, which is the power of every one who believes, should be committed to writing through Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles, but also has watched over it with a fatherly care up to the present time, and guarded it lest it might be corrupted by the craft of Satan or any fraud of**



men...The Hebrew volume of the Old Testament, which we have received from tradition of the Jewish church, to which formerly the oracles of God were committed, and retain at the present day, both in its contents and in its vowels, the points themselves, or at least the force of the points, and both in its substance and its words is divinely inspired, so that, together with the volume of the New Testament, is the single and uncorrupted rule of our faith and life, by whose standard, as by a touchstone, all versions which exist, whether Eastern or Western, must be tried, and whenever they vary, be made conformable to it" (Neimeyer, Collection Confessionum, p. 730). **Nothing could be further from the truth!**

## THE PROBLEM WITH SUCH A BELIEF IN DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Three things indicate the grim ferocity of this dogma:

1. It says the God has guarded the Bible from corruption; yet Griesbach collected one hundred and fifty thousand various readings in the New Testament manuscripts alone (B. A. Hinsdale, M.A., Genuineness and Authenticity of the Gospels, Cincinnati, 1872, p. 130), the greater part of which must, of course, be corruptions, since there can be but one correct reading for any passage.
2. It says the vowels were inspired, whereas the ancient Hebrew literature had no vowels.
3. It says that the vowel-points were inspired; whereas they did not come into use until the seventh century after Jesus, and were not perfected until four centuries later. This last article is a relic of that ancient belief that the translators, the copyists, and all the men who had aught to do with the transmission of the Bible from century to century, were inspired.

## THE BELGIAN CONFESSION (1561-1563 A.D.)

The Belgian Confession is just another curious illustration of the highly wrought mental condition of that time. It says: "We embrace the Holy Scripture in those two volumes of the Old and New Testament, which are called the canonical books, about which there is no controversy" (Neimeyer, Collection Confessionum, pp. 361-363, Art. 3-7).

What do they mean by saying "about which there is no controversy?"

Then follows a list of the books of the Bible as we receive them now, **including also the books which, as you have seen, had been in controversy for 1500 years and were even then.** And notwithstanding these facts the italicized words were subsequently changed to read "about which there never was any controversy" (Ibid.). **What a lie!**

The creed proceeds, "And we believe these things contained in them...because the Holy Spirit witnesses to our consciences that they emanated from God" (Ibid., pp. 361-363). We are told by theologians that we cannot trust our reason, that we must "experience the testimony of the spirit" to believe the doctrines of the church, and that this testimony can be relied upon. **Yet here we find a people offering the "testimony of the spirit" to the truth of a thing which we now know to be false!!!** The "testimony of the spirit" is a mental delusion. The Christian no doubt thinks he has it. He is honest in it, but he mistakes. There is no such thing. His imagination supplies the facts, just as it the case with a man suffering from delirium tremens, who thinks he sees various hideous creatures. Righteous enthusiasm, such as says that "every word in the blessed New Testament was inspired by God", is a mental and moral delirium tremens.

The Protestants, however, through convinced that the Bible was infallibly inspired, had their difficulties in determining what the Bible really was. And the fierceness with which they insisted on their views ended in the suppression of all historical criticism (Westcott, Canon, p. 465). Erasmus (1467-1536 A.D.) said that Hebrews was not written by Paul, nor Second John and Third John by the Apostle, but by another John; nor Revelation by John (Westcott, Canon, p. 467). He was the literary leader of the Reformation. While he was still a Catholic,

an attack was made upon his views by the Sarbonne, the theological faculty of Paris; censure was placed on his doubts, and it was declared that, no matter if the genuineness of certain books had been disputed in ancient times, the fact that the church has since accepted them made it wrong for any Christian to dispute them (Westcott, Canon, p. 470).

## **BODENSTEIN, OF KARLSTADT (1520 A.D.)**

Bodenstein, the reformer, and great friend but finally the persecuted enemy of Luther, divided the books of the Bible into three classes. In the first he placed the Four Gospels; in the second of "less authority" he placed the "acknowledged" Epistles of the New Testament (i.e., thirteen of Paul, First Peter, and First John); and in the third class, as of least authority, Hebrews, James, Second Peter, Second John, Third John, Jude, and Revelation. He omitted the book of Acts entirely.

## **LUTHER**

Luther said that Hebrews was written by neither Paul nor an apostle but did not place it on equality with the epistles written by the apostles. He thought it was a compilation for pre-existing records, and while it had much in it that was good, it also had "wood, straw, or hay" in its composition. James was, he said, an epistle of straw, with no character of the Gospel in it; it was not written by any apostle, and was not a true Bible book (Pref. Epis. Jacobi). The Epistle of Jude was, he declared, a reprint from Second Peter (compare the second chapter of Second Peter and the first part of the third chapter of the Epistle of Jude, he will see that they closely resemble each other) and therefore it did not, in his opinion, belong among the canonical books (Pred. Epis. Judae). Revelation he considered neither prophetic nor apostolic, and though that it was almost on a level with the fourth book of Esdras, which last he proposed to throw into the river Elbe (Davidson, p. 216). He modified this view twelve years later so far as to say that it was a dumb prophecy, and that there was no objection to any one believing it to have been written by the Apostle John, who desired to do so (Westcott, p. 479). As for himself he did not believe it. He placed Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation in an appendix to his New Testament, as of inferior authority (Westcott, Canon, p. 477).

## **ZWINGLI (1531 A.D.)**

Zwingli declared that he took no account of Revelation, for it was not a book of the Bible (Works, ed. Schuler II, i. 169). Ecolampadius (1531 A.D.) said that the Protestants of Switzerland did not compare James, Jude, Second Peter, Second John, Third John, and Revelation, with the other books of the Bible (Epis., i. 3, c., ed. 1548). Calvin, on the other hand, said that though Hebrews was not written by Paul, it was through a Satanic device that its authority had been questioned (Pref. Heb.), and that Second Peter, though not written by Peter, was written by some disciple at his command (Pref. Epis. as Heb.). He passed over Second John, Third John, and Revelation, without any notice in his commentary.

Luther and his successors, it will be seen, made the same distinction between the New Testament books that had been made between those of the Old Testament, classifying them according to the "generally received" and the "controverted." It was the council of Trent which obliterated the distinction between the books of the Old Testament, and the Calvinists who obliterated it between the books of the New (Davidson, Canon, p. 217). The Lutherans also discarded subsequently Luther's views, and accepted all the books as of equal authority, and thus all over the Protestant world the books of the canon were placed on the same level.

We are almost done. Let us continue.





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# THE TESTIMONY OF THE 17TH CENTURY CHURCH FATHERS CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

## WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY (1647 A.D.)

Finally, the Westminster assembly in 1647 adopted a list which has since been accepted by the Presbyterians of England, Ireland, and America, the Congregationalists of both countries, and, in short, by the Protestant evangelical and orthodox churches with which we come in contact in our daily life in the United States. It is in the famous Westminster Confession that we find the authority for the current books in our Christian Protestant Bibles, and is the same as the Catholic list except that it rejects the Old Testament apocrypha (Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, iii. 601). The latter was, however, for a long time printed in an appendix, and some who read this, especially elderly persons, can remember seeing the apocrypha in the old family Bibles. But in 1827 the British and Foreign Bible Society decided that it would no longer circulate those books (Lange, Comm., xv. 56ff., Am. ed., 1880), the American Bible Society followed its example (Schaff, Bible Dict., "Apocrypha"), and thus it was that our Bible received its finishing touch, as we have been accustomed to see it.

Now let us finish.



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# THE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION CONCERNING THE NEW TESTAMENT

I have attempted to give you, the reader, a brief review of the subject at hand:

- We found without question that the greater number of books of the New Testament are anonymous.
- Of these books no one knows who wrote them, and no one knows when they were written. They are, in the case of the most important books, of those most relied on for doctrinal support, compilations from pre-existing records. But who wrote those records, and who made the compilations, are entirely unknown.
- We have seen repeatedly that when the books of the New Testament came into use they were not considered inspired or the word of God as we esteem them today.
- Many Gospels, Epistles, and Revelations, not now in use in Christianity, were read in the churches in the early centuries for edification.
- About the close of the second century or the beginning of the third century, when the Gentile Roman Catholic Church was forming, a source of authority for appeal in case of dispute over new doctrines was necessary, and the Fathers instituted the theory that certain books were "inspired" in hopes of bolstering their political, economic, and theological positions as one "sect" fought another "sect" for supremacy. But the books which they said were divine were not always the same books which we have now. They declared many books to be inspired which we do not think to be; and they ignored and rejected books which have since been invested with divine honors.
- The contentions of the sects made it impossible for the new church to unite on the Gospels, which had been first in use, and they were, therefore, discarded, and our present Four Gospels were substituted. To give them greater authority, the names of the Apostles who had been with Jesus were forged to them, literary forgery in those days not being considered a crime as today. **The Fathers in asserting that the books were inspired, were guided not by critical ability nor by the Holy Spirit, but by ignorance and gross superstition.** Instead of being great scholars, they were extremely superstitious, ignorant, and credulous, and in general very inferior intellectually.
- After much controversy, and even bloodshed, it became apparent that they could not agree as to what books should form the New Testament; and councils took the matter in hand, and for nearly twelve centuries they argued and discussed it. And finally, the Gentile Roman Catholic Church in the council of Trent, and the Greek Church in the council of Constantinople, decided once for all what the list should be for their adherents; and the Westminster Assembly gave the English-speaking Protestants their catalogue of current books as well.

There you have it. It is not pretty, but that is because the Holy Spirit was not behind it and had nothing to do with such confusion. The New Testament, as we have it today, is hardly more than three centuries old.

## SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW KNOWING THIS?

Well you can choose to do nothing, or you can do what I did when I ran across such information years ago; I began a serious study of the New Testament and the origins of the religious doctrines within it. Since most of



our readership looks to Jesus as the greatest example of Godliness, then why don't we let "this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." I recommend that, but sadly, that mind is not always accurately portrayed in the New Testament. Now only do we have a problem of what books, or who wrote them, but the doctrines contained within them are often diametrically opposed to what Jesus and the earliest Jerusalem church believed let alone expected non-Jews to believe as part of "believing Israel."

This paragraph as I write it is one of the most important statements I have ever made. On the surface it seems so simple but I assure you that the dynamics involved in its contemplation are explosive. I ask that you give serious attention and thought to what I will say and share with you in these articles that follow in this web-site as we look at the problems and contradictions of religious doctrines in the New Testament when compared with the Jewish Scriptures read and believed by Jesus. What you read in the next days and weeks as delineated on this web-site, as well as <http://paganizingfaithofyeshua.netfirms.com> has the ability to change your life and deliver you from the most darkest and vilest idolatry of which most of you are not yet aware. In these articles I will disclose the substantial identity of Gentile Christianity as known and practiced today with the most popular and widespread "Pagan" religion of all time, Sun worship. Such religious doctrines, of which now you are not aware, are scattered throughout the New Testament and put into the mouth of Jesus and the Apostles, even Paul. You may be more familiar with such Sun worship by the term of Mithraism, or the Persian Zoroastrian religion. You might not be aware, and I find that the vast majority of Christians are not, but Mithraism was the closest and all but successful rival of Christianity in the Roman world, and which might indeed have been successful, but that, soon after Constantine prostituted the Empire to the Church,— "with the triumph of Christianity Mithraism came to a sudden end. The laws of Theodosius signed its death warrant." (Catholic Encyclopedia, x, 402.) That there may be no suspicion that the recital of these remarkable identities of Christian "revelation" on the pages of the New Testament line up identically with Pagan religious doctrines in many ways. If you look to Jesus for "Divine Revelation" or even to Christianity as a "Divine Revelation" then once you see this information then it is beyond any question that God had anything to do with giving the Christian much of what he believed today; let alone believes about Jesus.

You should ask yourself, especially in light now after having seen how this document touted as the Word of God, the New Testament, was gathered and put together, one simple question: **WHAT IS REVELATION...AND IS CHRISTIANITY BUILT UPON A DIVINE AND UNIQUE AND GODLY REVELATION?**

***"When Pagan myths already current and long known to everyone for hundreds and thousands of years can be later found to be foundational to many dogmas and doctrines held sacred in Christianity because they are held and believed to be unique revelations from God and as found on page after page of the New Testament, then Divine revelation and inspiration cannot be appealed to for the origin of the Christian Faith and its teaching and such incriminating evidence must bring serious doubt to such doctrines and dogmas within Christianity as stemming from God... sadly these once held "sacred" doctrines must now understood as pagan copies."***

You have seen the history of the documents (New Testament) espousing such "Divine Revelation;" now it is time for you to begin such a study into these doctrines of the New Testament as compared with the beliefs of the Jewish Bible Jesus used.....to see the changes, the misquotations on purpose, the purposeful changing of the Jewish Scriptures in order to replace the religion of Jesus intended for all the world with one of Rome's making.

The Catholic Encyclopedia states: "The existence of revelation (as in the New Testament) is as reasonably established as any historical fact"! (C.E. xiii, 607.). I would think that the evidence I just submitted to you says otherwise without a doubt. It is time to wake up! These above statements are the most incredible lies ever uttered in the history of mankind. And I will quickly prove them so. Lets get back to truth, shall we. "Divine Revelation is thus of things not previously known and which the revelationless mind of man is incapable of acquiring or inventing by its own efforts." So exactly with "revelation": if some impostor or deluded person (e.g. Mohammed or Joseph Smith) claims that he has received a personal—and therefore necessarily private

—"revelation" from some god, the only way whereby he can get a valid patent of authenticity and credibility for his "revelation," is to prove that its subject-matter has never before been known and in credulous circulation; the moment that from the search of the records—of other, or comparative religions,—it is shown that the same proposition has been previously known and current, in use and practice among some other priestcraft and its devotees—the thing is no revelation at all: the claim is a fraud!!!

## **PUTTING GENTILE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS DOCTRINES UNDER THE MICROSCOPE OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION**

Let us see how this indisputable rule works when applied to Gentile Christianity. In doing so we will either prove beyond any doubt that the Christian Faith is Divine unique revelation to mankind and worthy of trust and faith for the world to come or else is but the reiteration of prior pagan beliefs and is not to be trusted for truth or preparation for the world to come. The answer to such inquiry will either prove Christianity uniquely Divine and God breathed as is attested for it; or expose it as anything but Divine but rather pagan whereby then you would be better served to return to the faith once given the Saints; Biblical Judaism where the Gentile believer, as a Godfearer, has a place both within Biblical Judaism and the Israel of God and not apart from it. Let us see what we can find, shall we?

You quest begins as you continue to read through this web-site as you examine the various studies presented:

- The New Testament And Related Studies
- The Jewish Jesus
- Pauline Studies
- Messianic Studies
- Johannie Studies

Let me say in closing we stand ready to help each and every one of you come to the knowledge of the truth and "THE" faith once given to the saints. Extensive bibliographies are presented and it is hoped you will avail yourselves to them. Feel free to E-mail us or give us a call if you wish.....Bet Emet, Pastor Craig, 972-6756193 as we look forward to helping you to see through the maze of 2000 years of Gentile corruption of Jesus and the faith once given to all. Shalom.



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# THE TENSION BETWEEN ALLEGORICAL GNOSTICISM AND THE LITERALISM OF LATER EMERGING WESTERN CHRISTIANITY

Let us never forget that religious movements tend to embrace two opposing poles, which I call "Allegorical Gnosticism" and "Literalism", with particular individuals inhabiting the whole spectrum between the two extremes. This classification is important because Gnostics from different religious traditions (Gentile and Jewish) have far more in common with each other than they do with the Literalists within their own tradition. While Literalists from different religions clearly hold conflicting beliefs, Gnostics from all traditions use different conceptual vocabularies to articulate a common understanding. When this "literalized" form of Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the brutal Roman Empire, the original mysticism of the followers of Jesus was distorted almost beyond recognition and formed into dogmatic creeds of what was to become the "imitation church." When this "literalized" form of Christianity was adopted by Rome at its official religion the original Christians and followers of Jesus were violently suppressed, their scriptures burned and their memory all but erased by the fires of Rome. The Roman Church fabricated its own account of the origins of Christianity, still believed today, which dismisses the first Christians as a minor cult of obscure heretics. Western Christianity would win the war both with Israel and the Jews; both theologically and militarily. With this comes a "New Divine Revelation" from Roman pens which challenges and replaces the wisdom and religious beliefs of the Jews which existed over two thousand years ago and beyond as far back as Egypt. Sadly Western Christianity will triumph over the "Gnosis" of the ancients and Judaism; the religion of the historical Jesus. Soon Rome is re-interpreting existing "religious allegories" in a "literal" sense and creating their own religious literature (the New Testament) in response to existing Gnostic religious writings which will tell the world a story about a "Literal Divine Christ" which is untrue to both the existing Gnostic understanding of God as well as His "Christ." This website is the story about the Roman re-interpretation of these prior religious beliefs and understandings of God (Gnosticism and Judaism) which finds ultimate expression in the Roman New Testament.

The sad reality that faces such a student who undertakes such a serious study of the New Testament is that you will see that much that you have been "literally" taught and accepted most of your Christian life from the pages of this New Testament is the false "reinterpretation" of Divine Truths best explained and understood when left as "allegory" and "myth." You will see that most of Christian sacred doctrines has little in common with the Yeshua [Jesus] of history and his faith in God as Jew. Such hatred of the Jew and his Torah [Law] by the early Gentile and Roman Church has spawned the greatest cover-up of previously existing Divine Truth in the history of mankind; the truth concerning the Jesus of history and the expected Jewish Messiah. In the place of the Jewish Messiah we have been sold "Christ of Faith" of Rome's making. When this "Christ of Faith" is "literalized" then we encounter the counterfeit and lose the intended meaning once held by the ancients. We can lay the blame for our misunderstanding today squarely upon the New Testament which is a mixture of "theologies" that overlap and present a blurred and distorted vision not only of the Jewish Messiah but the Jesus of history as well. It is time someone deal with these issues and sorts this out for the average reader. By God's help I plan on doing just that.

## QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS BEFORE WE PUT OUR FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- How did the New Testament itself as a collection of writings come into being and what were the factors behind it?
- Why the need for a New Testament anyway since salvation was already available to the Jew and Gentile in their respective Covenants with God?
- Who collected the writings which were to be included in the New Testament, and on what principles?
- What was the religious belief and religious belief system of the person who first saw the need for a New Testament and who gave us the "FIRST" New Testament?
- How did this religious belief system of the originator of the "FIRST" New Testament differ from the religious belief system of James & the Jerusalem Church & Jesus?
- Who found it necessary to respond to this "FIRST" New Testament with a "SECOND" New Testament that contradicted and corrected this prior one in many places and who was he?
- What was the motives of the writer of the "SECOND" New Testament and where did these other books come from which were not previously available to the first collector?
- Were there new "theologies" added in subsequent additions to the "FIRST" New Testaments and how did the "theologies" differ and change from what the Jewish Church and Jesus believed?
- What "replacement religious" doctrines can be discerned and seen in the "SECOND" New Testament writings and later collections of supplements which were later added to existing prior "New Testaments"?
- What circumstances led to the fixing of a list, or canon, of authoritative books?
- What religious beliefs were lost from "the faith once given to the Saints" by the "literalization" of prior allegorical religious beliefs held by the Gnostics and the Jews?

This is not going to be an easy or a quick study. The answers to these questions as well as many other we will encounter on this website will be only discerned by historical research. Our object is to find out what historical research reveals about the origin of the New Testament canon and the earliest meanings of "the Christ" as held by the earliest followers of Jesus before Rome corrupted such concepts in the second and later centuries.



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# ADOPTIONISM...THE EARLIEST BELIEF ABOUT JESUS

Put most simply, adoptionism is the theory that Jesus was in nature a man who became G-d by adoption. Most identify this event with his baptism. **Ebionism is similar to Adoptionism.** It denies the Jesus' divine sonship with the Father. Ebionism also teaches that the Father and the Son (Jesus) are not consubstantial, meaning of the same substance, the same "person" or being. The [Ebionites](#) were the earliest to teach "adoptionism" concerning the nature of Jesus.

The earliest extant work which expresses this position is the [Shepherd of Hermas](#), thought to be written by the brother of the bishop of Rome about A D 150. It taught that the Redeemer was a virtuous man chosen by G-d, and with him the Spirit of G-d was united. He did the work to which G-d had called him; in fact, he did more than was commanded. Therefore he was by divine decree adopted as a son and exalted to great power and lordship. This book was consistently considered "scripture" by the earliest church writers and finds its way into the earliest "canon" lists of the Early Church Fathers. Later it will be removed and we no longer have it in our New Testament for obvious reasons.

**Adherents of this Christology who were declared heretics in the third century asserted it had at one time been the dominant view in Rome and that it had been handed down by the apostles.** This view was perpetuated in the second and third century church by the dynamistic monarchians, who taught that Christ was a mere man on whom the power of G-d came and who was then adopted or constituted the Son of G-d. A leader in that general movement was Theodotus, who came to Rome from Byzantium about 190. He taught that Jesus was a man who was born of a virgin through the operation of the Holy Spirit. After the piety of his life had been tested, the Holy Spirit descended on him at the baptism. By this means he became Christ and received the power for his special ministry. But he was still not fully G-d; that was achieved through resurrection. Theodotus was excommunicated by the Roman Church, and the effort of his followers to found a separate church early in the third century had little success.

**Adoptionism was an attempt to explain the divine and human natures perceived by some in Christ and their relation to each other.** And as the great Christological debates raged during the fourth and fifth centuries, there were always a few who could be accused of taking this position. It did not flare again extensively, however, until the latter part of the eighth century, when it produced a commotion in the Spanish and Frankish churches. Elipandus, bishop of Toledo from c. 780, in his writings on the Trinity expressed the view that Christ was an adopted son; Felix, bishop of Urgel in the Pyrenees, taught a similar position soon thereafter. Numerous local churchmen opposed them; and their teachings were condemned by three synods under Charlemagne, who assumed the position of ruler of the church in his realm and who was concerned with its unity. Pope Adrian I also became involved, and the recantation of both men was obtained. They had a numerous following, however, and extensive efforts were required to bring these people back into the fold. The effects of the controversy lasted for decades in Toledo. Possibly remnants of the old Arian heresy contributed to the popularity of adoptionism at this time. **A sound refutation of adoptionism was never made, and leanings in that direction appeared in some scholastic writings during the late Middle Ages.**

adoptionism...the earliest beliefs about jesus

**H F Vos Bibliography. A Harnack, History of Dogma.**





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## THE INFLUENCE OF IRENAEUS UPON THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Irenaeus was the true founder of the Second New Testament canon in his refutation of Marcion and the First New Testament.

His date is from 180 to 200 A.D. Understand that before Irenaeus, 180 A.D. we find no mention of the Gospels by name by those who quote or reference passages which would later be included in them. That means that Christian men of letters the likes of Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and others are completely silent and not one quote from any of the four gospels we have today are mentioned.

**Answer for yourself:** In the absence of any documentation of or references to these 4 Gospels before 180 C.E. then then does it stand to reason that these 4 Gospels of today (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) are written early as Roman Christian tradition teaches today? Gospels did exist but they were not these as we have today. You might want to look at Nag Hammadi for them but today these Gnostic Gospels and their allegorical understanding of "the Christ" have been labeled for over 1900 years by Roman Catholicism as "heresy".

**Answer for yourself:** But were they really?

**Answer for yourself:** Could it be that they were the earliest understanding of "the Christ" and we don't know it today because they were destroyed and burned and only in the last 50 years have they have been discovered? Did Rome burn the earliest gospels out of existence and kill those who accepted these allegorical beliefs about "the Christ" and author a refutation of them and present it to the world as the "Second New Testament" whereby the allegorical understanding of "the Christ" was replaced with a "literal" understanding of "the Christ"? Well we have to get to know Irenaeus if we are to get to the bottom of this forgery.

Of our Gospels Luke was probably compiled or written about 170 A.D., Mark about 175 A.D., John about 178 A.D., and Matthew about 180 A.D. Irenaeus began to use them within a very short time after their origin, though it was probably not until the year 200 A.D. that he knew of them all. He, in rejection of Marcion and his First New Testament and the earliest understanding of "the Christ" would come up with them after 180 C.E. and use them exclusively in his replacement New Testament, and his canon consisted of the Four Gospels, Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul (rejected Hebrews), First John, and Revelation (Davidson, The Canon Of The Bible, p. 138. In an appendix he placed as of less authority, Second John, First Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, 138). The Epistle to the Hebrews, Jude, James, Second Peter and Third John he ignored (Davidson, The Canon of the Bible, p. 138). You should take note that this is the first time we meet with anything like a recognition of our present canon; and Irenaeus rejected several books which were used by the earliest Christians. As he is the earliest Christian writer to mention the Four Gospels, orthodox theologians now assert that they must have been in use before, and recognized as sources of authority; because, they say, it would not have been possible if, as unbelievers assert, other Gospels had been in use before, to discard those others that to substitute a new series in their place. Ha! The reply to this is, that it was not only possible, but it is what occurred, as history testifies. Long

before we received the "Four Gospels" hundreds of different "gospels" were in wide circulation through the empire. The intense rivalry between the different sects in the first two centuries, and especially between the **Paulines, the Petrines, and the Johannines**, had taught them that neither could master the other, and neither could hold exclusively to its sacred books, and insist on their adoption. The result was compromise, just as in a presidential convention, when the friends of the leading candidates find that neither of the favorites can be nominated, they unite on an entirely new man, one who before has hardly been mentioned. **The Catholic Church was just forming (about 170 C.E.), by the union of the small sects and churches into one great body, and the necessity of some written source of authority, of a Bible recognized by all, was apparent; and it was this need which formed the canon** (Davidson, *The Canon Of The Bible*, p. 134, 136, 164). The old books were discarded or suppressed, and the new ones took their place. In case you missed it political necessity was the reason for the Roman Second New Testament; to give credibility and authority for the new religion what was to go by the name of Jesus which would be centered in Rome. Sounds like God to me!

**Previously no two sects had used entirely the same books** and many used only one; and this was true even for a long time after our Four Gospels came into use, and after the effort was made to form one universal canon. Diversity and conflicting doctrines and dogma was everywhere. The Holy Spirit really had a problem to deal with. But did he?

## CANONS, CANONS EVERYWHERE

Thus the **Ebionites**, the earliest Jewish believers in Jesus, (Iren., *Adv. Her.* 1.26) and the Cerinthians (Epiph., *Her.*, xxvii, 5; xxx, 3, 14) used only the Jewish Gospel of Levi written in Hebrew (St. Matthew) which we do not have today; the Cordonians used only Marcion's Gospel (*Pseudo-Tert. Adv. Om. Her.*, vi). The Marcionites used, of course, only their own Gospel which reflected the earliest beliefs in "the Christ" which were "allegorical" and did not teach a literal incarnation of "the Christ" as if in only one person. The Theodotians rejected St. John, as did also the Alogi (Blunt, "Dictionary of Sects," Alogi); and the Petrine Christians naturally preferred Mark's Gospel, which was Petrine (Tert. *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 5), just as the Paulists preferred Luke, which favored Paul (Tert. *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 5). **In the midst of these facts church strength could come only in union and in the adoption of books which should be acceptable to all. Unity for Rome was necessary at all costs.** That the New Testament is such a compromise is not in doubt. Its contents attest to the critical eye this fact (or should at least if you read deeply and with a critical eye). One familiar with different "theologies" find them mixed together in the New Testament; nothing is pure from beginning to end. **The Gospel according to Matthew is Petrine**, it being there that Jesus is represented as saying to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build my church" (Matt. 16:18). **Mark is also Petrine and Luke is Pauline**, as the early Christian Fathers testify (Tert. *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 5). **The Epistles of Peter are Petrine, the Epistles of Paul are Pauline, and the Gospel according to John, the Epistles of John, and Revelation are, of course, Johannine.**

**Answer for yourself:** What does this mean? It simply means that they teach a different "Christ"!

**You should take note that history at this time records the suppression of the old Gospels and the substitution of the new. The earliest Gospels were the Gnostic Gospels and archeology has demonstrated this beyond any doubt today. But we don't have them because Rome suppressed them and exerted great efforts to burn them along with their adherents.**

Thus, Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (190 A.D.), while on a visit to the church of Rnossus, in Cilicia, found them using the Gospel of Peter. Being appealed to, he permitted them to read it, notwithstanding the controversies it produced. Later he wrote: "But when I came to you I had supposed that all held to the true faith; and as I had not perused the Gospel presented by them under the name of Peter, I said, 'If this be the only thing that creates difference among you, let it be read.' But now having understood, from what was said to me, that their minds were enveloped in some heresy, I will make haste to come to you again" (Euseb., *Eccl. Hist.*, vi. 12). Eusebius has preserved this extract, and *though he does not say in so many words that the Gospel was*



*suppressed, he intimates it, and it is conceded by eminent writers that that was done* (Lost and Hostile Gospels, S. B. Gould, p. 245).

## THE TESTIMONY FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY

Again, early in the fifth century there was a man named Theodoret who was actively engaged in superintending the establishment of churches. In his travels he found the Diatessaron, or Gospel of Tatian, in used in orthodox churches, and he wrote:

*"I found also myself more than two hundred such books in our churches which had been received with respect; and having gathered all together, I caused them to be laid aside, and introduced in their place the Gospels of the Four Evangelists"* (Theod. Haeret. Fab., i. 20).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that in the fifth century he refers to "churches" (plural) which, in place of the Four Gospels we are acquainted with as if written by the Apostles, had hundreds of others? Is there a message from God in these that the earliest believes understood that we have been deprived of today?

**Answer for yourself:** Why were these churches not using these 4 Gospels if they had been known to be written by the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus? It is possible that they knew what we did not; namely, that these 4 Gospels were not written by them at all but distortions of the truth as then known to be held by the earliest Christians before Rome rewrites the New Testament after 180 C.E.?

These churches had over two hundred different books and gospels which we don't have at present and were content with reading them instead of what we have today.

**Answer for yourself:** What does that tell you? Evidently the Holy Spirit had not witnessed to them as well as thousands and thousands of others that they needed "new books" and were missing the only "four" gospels that really mattered! Oh come on now.....that is not true. Oh by the way, these earliest Jewish Christians also had the Bible Jesus used....the Hebrew Old Testament!!!!

As late as the fifth century one whose commission was the oversight and establishment of churches makes mention that there were over two hundred competing gospels accepted by the churches (plural) and they were at this time without the Four Gospels we think were from the beginning of the Apostolic movement. We could not be further wrong in our beliefs about the acceptance of the Canon even as late as the fifth century.

**Answer for yourself:** Were these people "saved" without this New Testament message from these "new" books which we feel preach is crucial for salvation?

Dr. Westcott says that "from this statement it is clear that the Diatessaron was so orthodox as to enjoy a wide ecclesiastical popularity" (Westcott, Canon, p. 320).

**Answer for yourself:** Did you church read or study from the Diatessaron last Sunday as the early churches did?

The fact of displacement is also recognized by Prof. Davidson:

*"Not until the latter half of the second century did the present Gospels assume a canonical position, superceding other works of a similar character, and receiving a divine authority"* (Davidson, Intro N. T., ii. 520).

I should be quick to add such authority was attested to those who promoted these "Four Gospels" over all

others which were then accepted and read in the vast majority of churches at that time. There was no standard at this time for everyone decided what was to be accepted as "divine oracles" and this varied by location and city. Everyone and every group was an authority unto themselves.

When, therefore, the orthodox clergy asks if it were possible that other Gospels could have been long in use in the early church and then have been suppressed and succeeded by our present Gospels, the reply is, *"That is exactly what occurred."*

## WHY FOUR GOSPELS.....?

**Answer for yourself:** But why should there be just four Gospel? Why not five, or six, or a dozen, or a hundred?

Irenaeus, who was, as I have said, the real founder of the canon of the Second New Testament, and who spent his life in endeavoring to establish the Catholic Church and the New Testament, determined this matter for all, and the church has followed one man and his decision in this matter. Whatever reason he gives, therefore, for the present number of Gospels, will be the reason why we have that number. Fortunately, he is very explicit on this point, and we know exactly what decided him. As you read his answer again I wish to prompt you to ask yourself is this sound like the work of the Holy Spirit in determining for the church for all time the number of Gospels.

Believe it or not, Irenaeus said that there was four quarters on the earth, and four universal winds (north, south, east, west), and that animals were four-legged, or four-formed, and therefore there should be four Gospels. His words are exactly on this matter:

*"It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four quarters of the earth in which we live, and four universal winds, while the church is scattered throughout all the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the church is the gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh....Therefore the gospels are in accord with these things...For the living creatures are quadriform and the gospel is quadriform...These things being so, all who destroy the form of the gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those (I mean) who represent the aspects of the gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer" (Adv. Haer., iii. x. 8 & 9).*

**Answer for yourself:** Do you now feel comforted in knowing that the Holy Spirit led Irenaeus to determine for all mankind the number of the Gospels of Divine revelation in relation to the number of feet that animals possess? You have got to be kidding!!!

**Answer for yourself:** What if the wind was not out of the South but South-East...could we add another Gospel?

And Irenaeus has the audacity himself to call us "unlearned." That is like the pot calling the kettle black. It has never ceased to amaze me as to the superstition and darkness possessed by those who today are revered as spiritual giants like the early Gentile Church Father are in many circles. The more you read them and how they conflicted and disagreed with each other it is almost impossible to find the Holy Spirit's tracks in anything they did. A quick look at the doctrines they created that mirror prior sun worship and that run parallel to their Council which determined the Canon is an eye-opening exercise to say the least. After reading the doctrines the these men created that run parallel with their selection of the Canon one find it almost to incredible to believe the Holy Spirit could have led them into all truth concerning the Canon but at the same time led them to develop and create blasphemous religious doctrines which Jesus neither believed nor his hand-picked followers taught.

There is no sadder spectacle in the intellectual world, than that of men possessed of really great mental



possibilities, frittering away their time and their self respect in trying to make a superstition appear reasonable by explaining its absurdities in an illogical manner such as Irenaeus just did. He would have been better served by walking in the dignity of rational intellectualism rather than staggering alone in a blind stupor propelled by ignorant mysticism.

Those modern theologians who quote Irenaeus as a learned and great man, do not take kindly to his argument for the number of the Gospels; nor to the fact that he said that the ministry of Jesus lasted twenty years (Ibid., ii. 22). And at the same time he was endeavoring to establish as of divine authority Gospels which said that Jesus' ministry lasted but three years?

**Answer for yourself:** Was the Holy Spirit asleep in Irenaeus' case? Can we believe anything he said? Can we trust the Second New Testament that just appeared and contradicted the earlier one in many cases?

We will pick up study concerning the formation of the Canon of the New Testament with the Muratorian Canon in the next article.



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# THE TRIUMPH OF LITERAL CHRISTIANITY OVER ALLEGORICAL CHRISTIANITY #1

I can remember how startled I was many years ago when running across the following quote from Augustine.

*"That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginnings of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christianity." Augustine, Retractions 1.13.3*

Over the years I would find more scholars which reinforced what Augustine said:

Discussing his search in Egypt for the source of esoteric knowledge, Gurdjieff said, *"It will seem strange to many people when I say that this prehistoric Egypt was Christian many thousands of years before the birth of Christ." Of his discoveries, he said, "The Christian church, the Christian form of worship, was not invented by the fathers of the church. It was all taken in a ready-made form from Egypt, only not from the Egypt that we know but from one which we do not know. This Egypt was in the same place as the other but it existed much earlier. Only small bits of it survived in historical times, and these bits have been preserved in secret and so well that we do not even know where they have been preserved."* —P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*

**Answer for yourself:** How could this be? How could the Christian Christ and the Christian religion as taught as a unique and divine Revelation from God have existed in antiquity with the Ancients?

Well if you have been a faithful reader of Bet Emet you are getting your answers. The Christian religion is centered on "the Christ" and the concept of Divine Mediation between the realm of pure Spirit and Matter. **This concept has been taught since the beginning of time.** We find similar concepts like "the Christ" as far back as Egypt and can trace this same concept down through recorded history and successive nations; finally calumniating with the Roman Empire. Now for an interesting fact.

Moustafa Gadalla, in his Historical Deception: The Untold Story Of Ancient Egypt, on page 212 says:

*"Essa is the Arabic name of Jesus and the only one used in the Koran. Essa was also the name used for Jesus by the early Christians in Egypt in the first century C.E. The name of the Jewish sect, the Essenes, indicates that they were followers of this (Essa) - Jesus"*

**Answer for yourself:** Was this "Jesus" seen in the time period in question (first century C.E.) understood by them to be a "literal" man or was this "Jesus" understood only as an "allegorical" concept? Well that is what we are trying to determine. Keep reading please.

Gadalla goes on to say: *"The name of the Jewish sect, the Essenes, indicates that they were followers of*



*Jesus. Philo Judaeus, who wrote the earliest account of this sect around 30 C.E., called them Essaeans from the Greek "Essaios" but stated that the word was of non-Greek origin. The Essaeans were included among the Jewish divisions of Josephus' time, but he called them the Essenes, the same term used in English. However, it was recognized that the word "Essene" must have had a Semitic origin, which is Essa, "Essaioi" would therefore mean "a follower of Essa (Jesus)"*

**Answer for yourself:** Why is what we just read so important?

**Answer for yourself:** Is there a substantial link between these earliest Egyptians, the later Essenes, and the even later still Christian Gnostics which were the earliest Christians? Well...yes there is a major link that is amazing but that has to wait for a while as we build our knowledge base concerning this mediation between God and man and how this Divine Intermediation was to be understood in the first place before it gets all twisted and distorted by Rome in the earliest centuries following the destruction of the Temple and the spread of Roman Christianity. The key to this whole thing as you read is that you remember what began as Divine Revelation given to the Ancients which was handed down throughout history, century after century, and which captured their Divine Truth for all time in the form of myth, symbol, and allegory will be altered by Rome and changed into a "literal" understanding of what was never intended to be understood in such ways. The result of which is idolatry today and we fail to grasp this since we are conditioned to approach the New Testament literally instead of allegorically. This will become all the more clear to you as your study progresses.

**Answer for yourself:** Now let us resume. Well, who was this "Essa" or this "Jesus" since these terms existed **BEFORE** the historical time period allotted for the supposed Jesus of history?

**Answer for yourself:** How could "Jesus" exist before the historical time period given for his "human birth"?

**Answer for yourself:** Just who is this "Essa" and this "Jesus" and how are we to understand him or it is even a "him"?

**Well that is what we are trying to determine and it all goes back to whether you take these documents in the New Testament and interpret them in a "literal" sense or in an "allegorical" sense.** We have seen and are constantly seeing that these earliest believers in "the Christ", "Jesus Christ", and "Jesus" did not see these terms as expressing a "literal human being" but rather spiritual and Divine Concepts that bridged the gap from the pure Spirit realm (God) and the physical realm ( physical Universe).

***These followers of "Essa" - Jesus (the Essenes) can be shown to be followers of this "Essa- Jesus" centuries before he was believed to be historically born!!! (THINK)!***

**This is a major problem for the "historical Jesus" of Rome's Second New Testament that altered the allegorical understanding of the earliest Gnostic Christian's understanding of "the Christ" as well as "Christ Jesus"! We have before us evidence testifying that a large sect of Judaism in the first century had been following "Jesus" long before his supposed birth....centuries before no less.**

**Answer for yourself:** How come we have never heard of this before? Well simply because the ramifications of this are more explosive than an atomic bomb.

Therefore the meanings of "Essa" by the Essenes have been intentionally ignored by those who stumble onto this, especially Christian scholars, **because the Essenes prove they are not following a human Christ or a human "Jesus" or a human "Joshua-Jesus" but only a Spiritual Principle that mediates between the realm of Spirit and the realm of matter. The facts are this: followers of Essa (Jesus) existed long before the time allotted to Jesus during the Romans' time we are led to believe. In other words the "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ" was been lost to us today and in place**

**of this Rome would give us a LITERAL "human Christ Jesus" that never existed and give this idea "life" on the pages of a book which they controlled and constantly altered to fit their evolving theologies as seen in their successive Church Councils.**

After this short provocative introduction let us begin our study in earnest.

I used to be amazed when reading the early Church Fathers and see how they incriminated themselves in their writings. The quote from Augustine above is a perfect example. All of this mind you was before I began a serious study in comparative religions. Now I have my answer or at least part of it. **I was lacking something even after I discovered that the life of Jesus as taught in the New Testament was a replay of the lives of Pagan gods and goddesses since time immemorial.** At that particular time in my life and my studies I was still looking at everything through the "literal" eyeglasses of prior conditioning. It would only be later, once I got into a serious study of Gnosticism, that I would discover that even with all my hard study over many years I had lacked a key element in my studies up to now.

**Answer for yourself:** What was that key element? It is very important that you understand what is said next.

Having read many works by respected scholars over the last two hundred years, some of which were able to be added to my library, they all seemed to approach this topic with a literal interpretation and hermeneutic. That being the case then the Jesus story when read in the New Testament seems to be only a pagan copy of pagan gods and goddesses and their exploits. It would only be once that I undertook a sustained and serious study of Gnosticism that I would begin to see beneath this Western "literal" interpretation of the New Testament and come to understand what really lay behind the similarities between the Jesus of the New Testament and the parallels to the pagan gods and goddesses. Once becoming acquainted with the intended "allegorical" understanding of these gods and goddesses as the Ancients intended then I was quickly able to correctly refocus upon the previously assumed historical Jesus story of the New Testament which up to then I had interpreted "literally" as well. Since only viewing the Jesus story "literally" I had resigned it as but a cheap pagan "knock-off" but now new possibilities and vistas immediately opened to me having now acquired a through and in-depth understanding of Gnosticism and the earliest Gnostic Christians as well as how they interpreted "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" ([see the Joshua-Jesus allegory](#)). What I had been conditioned to read and interpret "literally" in the New Testament my whole life was never meant to be understood as if it applied to a "literal" human being but through the disguise of a story told through the life of an anointed human being the earliest believers captured the "allegorical Divine Truths" since time began which were understood by them not "literally" but "symbolically" and "allegorically." I had "missed the forest for all the trees" if you get my drift.

## **LOSING THE TRUTH ABOUT "THE CHRIST"**

Now their religious literature once collected in Marcion's First New Testament dealing with "the Christ" could be seen correctly for what Marcion intended to understood "then" in his day. **No longer would I approach the whole of the New Testament (both the earliest writings and the later additions which comprise Rome's Second New Testament...ours today) with "literal" spectacles and fail to see what parts were first to be understood only in an "allegorical" sense (the earliest and First New Testament of Marcion the Gnostic). Having this "key" then when examining the later additions to Marcion's Gnostic First New Testament (Rome's refutation of it including all the forged additions over the next few centuries) it was amazing how simple it became to see this "construction of a human Christ" and also see what a huge effort and undertaking had been done to manifest a "literal Christ" and a "literal Christ Jesus" in the documents which were in 180 C.E. added to the already existing Gnostic New Testament.** Not knowing that there was a earlier Gnostic New Testament and a later anti-Gnostic New Testament hampers the student and reader in being able to see the "allegorical Christ" apart from the "literal Christ." Lacking this knowledge we approach the whole of the New Testament today and see it only through a "literal" perspective as if a "unit". That means added error and later inserted "forged" writings in the names of Paul and other Jewish Apostles had corrupted our ability to understand the earlier Divine Revelation within it correctly which taught a non-literal Christ. We see sadly this "Christ" as if a human being and worship is give to this human being



and this is gross idolatry but it passes Sunday after Sunday as accepted "orthodoxy" because we have been programed to see "literally" this "Christ Jesus" before or if ever we see "allegorically." We need better teachers!

*In so doing this "literal" view imposed upon a prior "allegorical" book ideas and religious beliefs that are simply wrong.*

When I added to this new acquired "allegorical" understanding of the earliest Gnostic Christian understanding of "the Christ" the accumulated knowledge of textual alterations to the New Testament which I had acquired over the previous ten years of study in comparisons of the Hebrew Scriptures were their purposeful mistranslation and misquotation as found in the New Testament then the puzzle's last pieces came together. I saw clearly when comparing the earliest epistles and Marcion's gospel in the First New Testament with Rome's later Second New Testament (reworked first by Irenaeus) and its repeated alterations that there was an undeniable attempt to alter the "allegorical Christ" and turn this religious concept into a "literal human being" through numerous textual forgeries. This was done mind you not only by the hands of early proto-Catholic Church Fathers but later ones as well and this forgery continued well into the fifth century. The later refutation of the earlier Gnostic New Testament (given to us by the Gnostic Marcion) by Rome altered almost beyond recognition this "allegorical Christ" which was the belief held concerning "the Christ" by the earliest Gnostic Christians. No greater deception has possibly even been perpetrated upon mankind than possibly the Roman alteration of "the Christ" and the Jewish Messianic concepts which we also find in this New Testament. They go hand in hand!

When one undertakes such a study as I have described above one finds a recurrent pattern sooner or later. Deeper spiritual truths are often lost or at least clouded by a literalistic interpretation that always follows by those who fail to study and grasp accurately the religious issues involved. It is a common pattern in the history of spirituality that dissident, nonconformist Gnostics find they have unwittingly inspired an authoritarian Literalist religion (T. Freke, and P. Gandy, The Complete Guide to World Mysticism, Piatkus Books, 1997). Religions characteristically begin with charismatic teachers who share with their students their personal understanding of the topic at hand with small groups of spiritual enthusiasts, teaching the long-lived philosophy and Divine precepts in their own unique way. Over time as the numbers of students grows these charismatic leaders find that there is too many students for them to give personal time and access. This leads to some form or organization and delegation in order to hold together the once small band of devotees. Before you know it the dilution of personal teaching and oversight by the "master" inevitably leads to aberrant interpretations and a new religion has been born. But the more the student/master ratio becomes unbalanced, the more the general level of understanding diminishes. Subtle allegorical teachings become understood in shallow, superficial, and literal ways. The trajectory is one of inevitable degeneration from the simple but sophisticated teachings of Gnosticism to the shallow but often complex teachings of Literalism. This is exactly what happened with Christianity.

**Answer for yourself:** Did Rome deviate from the earliest understanding of the Ancients concerning "the Christ"? Yes. How?

By now you should be putting the pieces together whereby you can see that the earliest Christians were Gnostic believers who expressed their religious beliefs in "myth" and "allegory." This applies to Divine concepts like "the Christ", "the Sophia", "the Logos," etc. These were understood neither by the Ancients nor the earliest Christian Gnostic as if "literal" people. They simply personified their beliefs and presented them symbolically and in allegories whereby these "truths" found life through the literary

**medium of "allegories", "myths," and "symbols." Rome will change all that when they will refute Marcion's Gnostic First New Testament and replace it with one of their own making in 180 C.E. by the hands of Irenaeus which is presented to the world as a "literal" account of a human "Christ Jesus." This is the great deviation from what the Ancients had cherished and preserved since time immemorial.**

**As our examination and studies progress we will resume in the second article as we examine more closely how "literal" interpretation of much of the New Testament is the real "heresy". How ironic when you come to see this; especially in light of what Rome has been feeding us for 1800 years.**

**More to follow as we dig this out in detail.**





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# THE TRIUMPH OF LITERAL CHRISTIANITY OVER ALLEGORICAL CHRISTIANITY #2

## A LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF "THE CHRIST" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: IS THIS THE REAL HERESY?

In previous articles we have described how the [Joshua-Jesus myth](#) had been set in an historical context by Roman Christianity in spite of the received tradition that it was only understood "allegorically". It was inevitable that given enough time that some form of group of Christians would begin to interpret prior spiritual allegories about God and "the Christ" as if they were historical and as if they were a record of actual events. By the middle of the second century a Literalist school of Christianity had begun to emerge in Rome, with autocrats such as Irenaeus as its spokesmen. The criticisms of the Gnostics by Irenaeus, and especially by the Roman lawyer Tertullian, display the typical Roman distaste for Gnosticism and their "allegorical" understanding of "the Christ."

The Gnostics' understanding of the Joshua-Jesus story as an initiation allegory leading to salvation through Gnosis was replaced by the Literalists' idea of salvation through belief in an historical Messiah.

We need to understand the times which we read about and especially in light that any literature we read from a previous age must be interpreted as if we lived in that time as well if we ever hope to dig the truth from its pages. Having said that then understand that in these ancient days the Pythagoreans **allegorized** the works of Homer in the sixth century BCE. and it would be this technique which would be taken over by Hellenistic Jews who wrote in that day and age. It was in "vogue" you might say. This "allegorical" interpretation of religious concepts was then used extensively by Philo to read Platonic philosophy into the Hebrew scriptures. To pick up this literature today and force a "literal" interpretation upon it does great damage to our ability to gleam truth from the documents. The Gnostics' understanding of the Jesus story as an initiation allegory leading to salvation through Gnosis was replaced by the Literalists' idea of salvation through belief in an historical Messiah (T. Freke and P. Gandy, *Jesus and the Lost Goddess*, 2001, notes on pages 35-38, p. 231).

*"That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginnings of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christianity."* Augustine, *Retractions* 1.13.3

If we look at the quote from Augustine that began this series of articles then we should see that literalists did not claim Christian teachings to be radically different from Pagan philosophy and were well aware of the similarities between the story of Jesus and the Pagan myths of Osiris-Dionysus (see the quotes from other authors). But the literalistic proto-Roman Christian teachings of the Pagan Mysteries had

one unique eye-catching selling-point: the other Mystery cults had myths that may or may not have referred to actual events in the archaic past, but Literalist Christians claimed that their myth of the dying and resurrecting Godman had recently been realized in real life. This is Literalist Christianity's one claim to uniqueness, which is made by Augustine, the great spokesman of Christian Literalism. As someone who had been a follower of both the Pagan Gnostic Plotinus and the Christian Gnostic Mani before becoming a Catholic, Augustine knew there was nothing exceptional about Roman Christianity but this one incredible idea: "the Christ came in the flesh."

Christian Literalism was destined to dominate the West with an iron fist for nearly two millennia, but it began as an insignificant sect with gruesome enthusiasm for the imminent end of the world. The Gnostic myth that Jesus would appear at the culmination of time was an allegory expressing the idea that when all souls were reunited with the Consciousness of God there would be a return to the primordial state of Oneness and the cosmic drama would be over.

**Answer for yourself:** How did the later "literalists" and proto-Catholics change the prior Gnostic myth of Joshua-Jesus in this regard?

The literalists took this myth literally, developing the grotesque idea that Jesus was about to arrive to destroy the world and rescue a small group of Christian Literalists and condemn everyone else to eternal torment. We see this reworking of the original Joshua-Jesus myth in Matt. 16:28 and [Luke 21:12-36](#):

*Matt 16:28 28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (KJV)*

Count it a blessings that this turned out to be wrong or you like myself would never have been born. Jesus' prophecies in Matthew 16:28 and Luke 21:12-36 that some of his audience would live to see the Apocalypse were, if taken literally, clearly mistaken so again we see the "literalistic" interpretation in this passage could not have been its intended meaning.

However, replacing the mythical sacrificed Godman with an historical martyr led to Christian Literalism becoming a sort of "suicide cult" which, much to the horror of the Gnostics, encouraged its members to imitate Jesus by also seeking out a sacrificial death. In the Literalist version of Christian history the Roman authorities are pictured as singling out the Christians for terrible persecution. Actually they were often appalled at Christian Literalists' eagerness to be martyred (T. Freke and P Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess, 2001, p. 38-39).

Literalism replaced the enlightened Gnostic sage at the centre of a small group of initiates with a hierarchy of bishops at the head of an expanding evangelical cult. The whole purpose of Gnostic initiation was to bring initiates to spiritual maturity, where they would experience themselves to be completely free of any external authority and become their own "Christ" or "King". Literalists, by contrast, wanted to enlarge their religious powerbase and worked hard to keep their flock securely in the fold through the power of the Bishop and organizational measures coordinated from Rome. All the groups of believers were to be submitted to the mother Church of Rome. Despite the fact that in The Gospel of Luke Jesus teaches, "Everyone when his training is complete will reach his teacher's level," the Gnostic idea that Christianity was about oneself becoming a Christ became branded as blasphemous heresy (Ibid.).

The role of the Gnostic master was to undermine all of an initiate's opinions and encourage them to directly confront the Mystery of Life (God). The role of the Literalist bishops, on the other hand, was to tell people what to believe and to discipline those who disagreed. Free intellectual inquiry was actively discouraged and blind belief became exalted as a spiritual virtue. Augustine announced the triumph of Literalist



**Fundamentalism, writing, *"Nothing is to be accepted except on the authority of scripture, since greater is that authority than all powers of the human mind"* (Quoted in D. Fidler, Jesus Christ: Sun of God, 1993, p. 180.)**

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this such a problem? Rome was altering the Gnostic First New Testament given to us by Marcion which expressed the truth concerning "the Christ" as well as writing NEW "Scriptures" in Apostle's names by this time and deciding what was to be "from God" and what was not!

**Answer for yourself:** What else did Augustine say?

He also declared: *"I would not believe the Gospel if the authority of the Catholic Church did not compel me."* (Ibid., p. 320) [THINK]

As long as the Joshua-Jesus story was understood as a myth that has encoded and captured Divine Truths, Christians were at liberty to interpret it and change it as they felt appropriate; and they did as we see from historical evidences and the variety and evolution of Gnosticism. Once the Joshua-Jesus allegory became seen as a biography however, the development of intolerant dogmatism was inevitable. Literalists would argue fiercely for centuries over what Jesus actually supposedly did say and do, as they still do today. But, as the argument is about supposed historical events, they all agree that there is only **one** accurate version of what happened. And if only one version is right, that means everyone else is wrong.

**Answer for yourself:** But who has it?

## FORGERY OF OUR BIBLES

From the large number of Christian scriptures in existence, Literalists selected four gospels to form the canon of the New Testament.

Now we need to listen to a courageous scholar. Barnstone observes that: *"We can say categorically that the Bible, with the absence of sacred texts from the entire inter-Testamental period, with its acceptance of a small and repetitious canon for the New Testament, with the exclusion of all later Christian Apocrypha, and the total rejection of Gnostic scriptures, has given us a highly censored and distorted version of ancient religious literature. The impression is given that somehow Christianity sprang self-generated like a divine entity, with no past, into its historical setting"* (W. Barnstone, The Other Bible, 1984, xviii.).

Burton Mack observes about the canon: *"What is striking is the severe reduction of a large spirited literature to a very small set of gospels and letters"* (B. L. Mack, The Lost Gospel, 1993), p. 228.)

These gospels were then declared to be the only authentic gospels and all of the other Christian scriptures were denounced as heretical by Rome.

**Answer for yourself:** What does this mean for us today? It simply means that the earliest "gospels", like the ones discovered at Nag Hammadi, the Gnostic Gospels that taught an "allegorical" Christ, were excluded from this "canon" and were systematically destroyed in the Roman purge of what they later decided were "heresies". That means that the earliest understanding of these Gnostic Christians concerning "the Christ" was kept from us by the substitution of a Second New Testament of Rome's making.

The four New Testament gospels which we have in our possession in our New Testaments today are variations on the Jesus myth originally used by different schools of Christian Gnosticism. Let us not

forget that these earlier accounts of the "Joshua-Jesus myth" were understood "allegorically" in the beginning but later reinterpreted by "literalists in Rome" by the addition of genealogies, infancy narratives, Pastoral epistles, etc.; all with the intent of reorienting interpretation of "the Christ" as if these were historical events involving a real human being. Putting these four gospels together after they were "edited" created the illusion of there being four (albeit contradictory) eye-witness accounts of the same historical events. This belief has been undermined by the discovery that the gospel of Mark or even the "Q" gospel was the source used by both Luke and Matthew, and perhaps even John, who supposed independence of Mark is challenged today. The later triumph of Literalism has left us with the distorted impression that these gospels were always the most popular Christian scriptures, but this is not true.

*In fact we don't hear anything about or any quotes from then from any Matthew, Mark, Luke and John by any Church Father until the late second century!*

The names Matthew, Mark, Luke and John never appear in Justin Martyr's extant work (160 C.E.), written in the mid-second century. However, a generation later, Irenaeus (180 C.E) brings forward these four gospels as if they have been recognized as authoritative since the beginning. And if that is not enough they not only appear out of nowhere but carry the apostle's names!

**Answer for yourself:** Can we find any trace of the Holy Spirit in deciding that the New Testament is to include only 4 gospels? This is what you have to decide once you evaluate the evidences concerning their production.

Let us examine what Irenaeus says concerning these 4 Gospels and see if this sounds like God to you: *"It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are, for there are four zones of the world and four principal winds"* (Quoted in J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius, 1957, p. 117.) Such stupidity exists in abundant amounts which you could see for yourself if you ever take time to read these early Church Fathers who everyone likes to make reference but which few have read. As Ludemann notes, Irenaeus' "artificial arguments" at least demonstrate that the idea was a novelty which needed defending (G. Ludemann, Heretics, 1995, p. 196). Likewise Justin has never heard of Acts (or Paul, the hero of most of that book, whom he likewise never mentions), which turns up in Irenaeus for the first time c. 175 CE. It is widely accepted that it was Marcion's set of authoritative writings that spurred the Roman Literalists to establish their own canon. (R.M. Price, Deconstructing Jesus, 2000, p. 80.)

**Answer for yourself:** How did these proto-Catholics and later Roman Catholics create authority of their Second New Testament? In order to promote their "new" Gospels and their Second Edition of the New Testament which now contained conflicting genealogies, birth narratives, infancy narratives, anti-Gnostic Pastoral epistles, etc., the "literalistic" bishops fabricated a lineage connecting themselves back to the fictional disciples of the gospels. They turned Paul from the "Great Messenger" of the Christian Gnostics into a bastion of Literalism by simply forging letters in his name which make him condemn their Gnostic rivals (the Pastoral Epistles for example). It's a simple trick, and it has worked marvelously for over 1800 years; that is until the recent archaeological discoveries of the last one hundred years and now the "cat is out of the bag."

Here are the facts:

- Of the 13 letters of Paul in the New Testament, seven are accepted as being largely authentic.
- Of the remaining six, the Pastoral Letters - 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus - are widely held to



**be forgeries.**

Their sudden appearance in the late second century in the hands of Irenaeus makes perfect sense, as they turn Paul into a hostile opponent of Gnosticism. **You see Irenaeus either was the luckiest man on this planet to have discovered all these writings of Paul and the Apostles that had gone unnoticed for almost two hundred years by everybody or one of the best forgers in the history of the world!** Suspiciously, Irenaeus' massive work against heretics, *Unmasking and Refutation of the Gnosis, Falsely So-Called*, leans explicitly on a quotation from *1 Timothy* 6:20 (Ludemann, *Heretics*, p. 135).

***1 Tim 6:20 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** If, as I have shown in our articles on Paul being a Gnostic, that the "true" Paul was a Gnostic and never believed in a historical and fleshly Christ, and if Timothy was a follower of Paul, then does it stand to reason that Timothy would have believed in a "fleshly" Christ like Irenaeus would have us to believe in his above reference to *1 Tim. 6:20*?

Another key passage from the forged Pastoral Epistles is:

***1 Tim 3:16 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (KJV)***

In writings like these from Irenaeus which are referenced for the first time by him and him alone we find the true beginning of the "literalist" interpretation of "the Christ" as a fleshly human being and through Irenaeus and the Holy Roman Forgery Mill we will create in 180 C.E. a "fleshly Christ Jesus" and draw up many writings carrying the names of long dead followers of the "allegorical Christ" which are made to look anti-Gnostic by the creativity of later Roman "literalists".

**It was not until the last few centuries that scholarship became sophisticated enough to see through it. We have a whole website devoted to this "Pauline Problem".**

## **THE APPEAL TO PHILOSOPHERS TO FUTHER THE FLESHLY CHRIST**

Literalists also appealed to later Christian philosophers for authority for their new "literal" New Testament. They turned to such second-century writers as Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch and Minucius Felix of Africa. **These writers actually promoted a philosophical Christianity based around the mythical figures of the Logos and Sophia.** As Doherty observes: "In fact, the apologists as a group profess a faith which is nothing so much as a *Logos* religion. It is in essence Platonism carried to its fullest religious implications and wedded with Jewish theology and ethics" (E. Doherty, *The Apologists as Platonic Philosophers*, 1999), p. 276ff).

**Not only were they not Literalists, they were not even particularly interested in the figure of Jesus.** Athenagoras claims to go "minutely into the particulars" of Christian doctrine, yet never mentions Jesus at all". **Athenagoras of Athens is concerned only with the Son of God as the Logos and never once mentions the historical Jesus in 37 chapters of his Plea for the Christians.** (Doherty, op. cit., . 279). Neither does Minucius Felix, even when an adversary asks him to name someone who has actually returned from the dead. Instead he gives a list of diabolical beliefs and practices that have been wrongly attributed to Christians. These include (along with drinking the blood of sacrificed children and worshipping the genitals of priests!), worshipping a man who suffered death as some criminal as well as a wretched piece of wood (Ibid., 286). As he

comments:

*"These and similar indecencies we do not wish to hear. It is disgraceful to have to defend ourselves against such charges. When you attribute to us the worship of a criminal and his cross you wander far from the truth"* (Minucius Felix, Octavius, Chapter 9, quoted *ibid.*, p. 287).

Indeed, Minucius condemns Pagan Literalists who "choose a man for their worship" (*Ibid.*, p. 289) and Theophilus ridicules Pagan Literalists for believing that Hercules and Asclepius had actually come back from the dead (Theophilus, *Autolycus*, 1.9.13, quoted *ibid.*, p. 278).

**Answer for yourself:** Why did Literalists try and adopt to their cause writers who were so obviously promoting something quite different? Because there are no early Christian writers who defend the idea of there literally being an historical Jesus. They were desperate when countered by their religious opponents...the Gnostic Christians and other Pagan philosophers like Celsus and others. Many scholars show us today if we have the courage to read them that there were no historical disciples. There were no early Literalists. They all had to be invented.

The earliest Christian whose writings suggest he was a Literalist was Justin Martyr, 150 C.E. And yet, apart from the oft-repeated "crucified under Pontius Pilate", Justin gives us the basest details of Jesus' life (*Ibid.*, p. 284). But even Justin still saw Christianity as a branch of philosophy and set up his own philosophical school in Rome. Justin admits the similarity of his "Christ Jesus" with that of the "allegorist" and their Gnostic Christ when he says:

*Justin Martyr, First Apology, 20: "...on some points we teach the same things as the poets and philosophers whom you honour, and on other points are fuller and more divine in our teaching."*

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that one of Justin's most important followers was a man named Tatian?

After Justin's death, his pupil Tatian abandoned his master's Literalism and adopted a more Gnostic religious belief, suggesting that Justin's "literalistic Christ" was seen as something of an innovation, and regarded the Jesus story as comparable to Greek myths, urging his Pagan readers:

*"Compare your own stories with our narratives. Take a look at your own records and accept us merely on the grounds that we too tell stories (Tatian, Apology, 21; Doherty, op. cit., P. 282).*

Tatian later abandoned his master's Literalism and became a Gnostic, as did the Church Father Tertullian.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you hear that? The very famous student of Justin (who was one of the first to teach a historical Christ Jesus) would denounce his teacher following his death and Tertullian no less would revert back to Gnosticism at the end of his life.

**Answer for yourself:** What is going on here when we find that these first advocates of a "fleshly Christ Jesus" turn from such a novel belief at the end of their lives as seen in their writings and the writings of others about them?

**Answer for yourself:** Should we not by now expect this; especially in light of what Augustine has already said to us?

The role of the Gnostic master was to undermine all of an initiate's opinions and encourage them to directly confront the Mystery of Life (God). The role of the Literalist bishops, on the other hand, was to tell people what to believe and to discipline those who disagreed. Free intellectual inquiry was actively discouraged and



**blind belief became exalted as a spiritual virtue.** Augustine announced the triumph of Literalist Fundamentalism, writing, *"Nothing is to be accepted except on the authority of scripture, since greater is that authority than all powers of the human mind"* (Quoted in D. Fidler, Jesus Christ: Sun of God, 1993, p. 180.)

**Answer for yourself:** Why is this such a problem? Rome was writing these "Scriptures" by this time and deciding what was to be "from God" and what was not!

**Answer for yourself:** What else did Augustine say?

***"I would not believe the Gospel if the authority of the Catholic Church did not compel me."*** (D. Fidler, Jesus Christ: Sun of God, 1993, p. 320)

**Answer for yourself:** Has this not happened to us as well? Has not Rome compelled us to believe a lie by forging the New Testament and by that ensuring that we never come to the truth concerning "the Christ"?

We continue in the next article in this series.



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## THE TRIUMPH OF LITERAL CHRISTIANITY OVER ALLEGORICAL CHRISTIANITY #3

### UNTIL ROME'S SUPREMACY Gnosticism WAS A WORLD RELIGION AND HAD BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME

The traditional history of Christianity is that Literalism took the world by storm, while Christian Gnosticism remained a minor heretical fringe movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christian Literalism was initially a minor school of Christianity which developed in Rome towards the end of the second century. By this time Christian Gnosticism was an international movement which had spread throughout much of the Mediterranean, flourishing in cosmopolitan cities such as Alexandria, Edessa, Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome.

Despite the attempts of Christian apologists to belittle the significance of the Gnostics, it is clear that in the majority of Mediterranean countries Gnosticism was the original

Christianity. As Gibbon wrote in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, the Gnostics "covered Asia and Egypt, established themselves in Rome, and sometimes penetrated into the provinces of the West". Gibbon writes with characteristic wit: "For the most part they arose in the 2nd century, flourished during the 3rd, and were suppressed in the 4th or 5th by the prevalence of more fashionable controversies" (E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 1796, p. 458).

In Egypt the first Christians we hear of are the Gnostics Valentinus, Basilides, Apelles, Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes. There is no sign of any form of Christianity which resembles Roman Catholicism in Egypt until Bishop Demetrius at the end of the third century. The finding of the Nag Hammadi library, buried c.350 CE, supports this evidence!!! In Antioch the Gnostics Saturninus, Cerdo and Menander had established schools at the beginning of the second century. Now let us set the time frame for you for the next statement and hear it well. In 150 C.E. or about then we find that the Literalist Justin Martyr regrets that in Edessa, eastern Syria, to be a Christian means to be a follower of Marcion & it was Marcion, the Gnostic, who gave us the first New Testament which taught only the "allegorical Christ"! *The Chronicle of Edessa* notes the birth of Marcion, Bardesanes and Mani before it mentions Roman Christianity. Even Rome itself was full of different schools of Christian Gnosticism, such as the Marcellites, Marcionites, Archonites, Valentinians, Sethians, Barbeloites, Montanists and Ophites.

Literalists complained that in Persia all Christians were members of the Marcionite school of Christian Gnosticism (S.N.C. Lieu, Manichaeism, 1985, p. 39). Tertullian bemoaned the fact that Marcion's followers filled "the whole universe" (Quoted in J. Lacarrière, The Gnostics, 1989, p. 100). Let us not forget that toward the end of Tertullian's life that he would revert back to Gnosticism himself and reject all that he had once believed about a "historical Jesus". At the beginning of the third



century the Christian Gnostic sage Bardesanes initiated into his school a Syrian ruler who made **Christian Gnosticism the official state cult**. Bardesanes was born in 135 CE in Syria. He converted the local ruler to Gnostic Christianity and between 202 and 217 there existed a Gnostic Christian state in Syria. It was subsequently destroyed by the Roman emperor Caracalla.

We have already seen that the Pastoral Epistles were forged in Paul's name and it is important to know this if we are to understand what follows next.

**The forged Second Letter to Timothy has its phoney Literalist Paul complain, "All Asia has turned against me," which tells us that in the late second century the writer of these Pastoral Epistles bemoans the fact that "all Asia" was dominated by Gnostic Christianity!!! (THINK)!**

As if that is not enough we find that **The Epistle of Polycarp laments that "the great majority" of Christians embrace the idea of Jesus not existing in the flesh.**

The school of the third-century master Mani became a world religion in his own lifetime. *The Living Gospel of Mani* opens with words that deliberately echo those of Paul: "I, Mani, the Apostle of Jesus..." In Maul's work a constant battle is fought between the "New Man" and the "Old Man", terms which are clearly borrowed from Paul (Lieu, op. cit., p. 18). Eventually reaching from Spain in the West to China in the East, Manichaeism flourished for 1,000 years. Although Manichaeism had spread across the Western world by the fourth century CE (Augustine, for example, was a Manichean for nine years before his conversion to Literalist Christianity in 386 CE), it suffered harsh persecution under Theodosius at the end of the fourth century. By the sixth century it was anathematized, its leaders were beheaded and their followers murdered or exiled (Lieu, op. cit., viii). In the East, however, Manichaeism spread eastward along the Silk Road and became the state religion of the Uigur Empire (eastern Iran) in 762. Manichean apostles appeared at the Chinese imperial court in 694 and according to Portuguese reports the religion was still surviving in southern China in the seventeenth century. Our knowledge of Manichaeism has been revolutionized by the discovery in Turkestan in 1902 and Egypt in 1930 of a vast number of previously unknown Manichean texts in Coptic, Iranian, Turkish and Chinese. **Mani was a great eclectic who synthesized the Gnosticism of different religious traditions in an attempt to create a truly international form of spirituality which would "embrace all humanity".** His followers taught that **"Judaism, Paganism, Christianity and Manichaeism are one and the same doctrine"** (Lieu, op. cit., p. 108).

**Answer for yourself:** Can you by now see how that could be? It depends again upon interpretation of religious dogmas handed down since the Ancients. **If one interprets these prior myths "allegorically" like they were intended then there are unbelievable similarities between these faiths; however, if one interprets key allegorical concepts "literally" then great division arises.** Mankind has always knew that there existed within him a mediation between the Spiritual and Invisible realm of God and the realm of the visible realm of matter. If one understand this Spiritual Dynamic which almost defies expression in an symbolic or allegorical fashion then there is great similarities between these different faiths but it is only when we try to "literalize" this Spiritual concept and give it human manifestation that we run into a concrete wall. God was right when he said:

***Exod 20:4-5 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: (KJV)***

**CHRISTIAN LITERALISM WITH THE SUPPORT OF ROME DESTROYS DIVINE TRUTH**

Over the course of the third century, despite the flimsiness of its claims to be the authentic Christian lineage, Literalism grew in popularity in Rome and the West, **though Eastern Christianity remained overwhelmingly Gnostic**. Eventually, however, it was inevitable that the simplistic certainties and offer of vicarious atonement of Christian Literalism would attract more adherents than Christian Gnosticism, with its puzzling promise of Gnosis through mystical transformation of the inner self.

As Literalists grew more powerful, so did their bitter attacks on all other Christian schools. In response, Christian Gnostics condemned Literalists for establishing an "imitation Church" which no longer taught the secret Inner Mysteries. Some Gnostics, such as the Valentinians, tacitly went along with Literalism in an attempt to heal the ever-growing rift. **Other Gnostics, such as Clement of Alexandria and his successor Origen, paid little attention to the idea of an historical Jesus, and remained Platonists and continued to teach the Gnosis in their Christian school of philosophy**. I & II Clement do not contain any reference to the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. Clement quotes many gospel verses (and many which I cannot find in the gospels), but they are nearly all 'teaching' sayings rather than historical events. This in itself should be a concern to the evangelicals: if references to events from Jesus life from the gospels were reproduced in Clement it would not necessarily demonstrate the historicity of Jesus, only that Clement was familiar with the NT writings; but the fact that even this minimum level of acquaintance is not demonstrated by Clement in his writings is a clear problem. **What we find is that over time after the writing and promotion of the 4 Gospels is that people start to quote the Gospels as stories about the historical Jesus. And in the minds and hearts of the people the stories become "fact" as if this personage really had existed. Over time when this idea is still being challenged select Christian clerics will resort to forgery to substantiate their belief in a historical Jesus Christ and we see this so clearly in the historical examples of the forgery of Josephus (article 1 and article 2) and others.**

## THE INFLUENCE OF MYSTERY CULTS UPON THE PROMOTION OF A HISTORICAL JESUS

Christianity grew in popularity as part of a general upsurge of interest in Mystery cults, such as the Mysteries of Mithras. Over a period of 350 years Mithraism developed from a little-known Persian cult into the dominant religion of the Roman Empire, until at the end of the second century CE it was adopted by the emperor Commodus. **Mithraism first appears on European soil at Tarsus** in the middle of the second century BCE.

**Answer for yourself:** Where was Paul born? **That should explain Paul's religious synthesis found in "his gospel"**.

According to Plutarch, Romans were first initiated into the cult by followers brought back from the campaign waged against **Mithradates (note name)** by the Roman General Pompey in c.64 BC (Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, 24). After Commodus (emperor 180-192 CE) was initiated into the cult there was an explosion in the building of Mithraic sanctuaries across the empire (F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithras*, 1903, p. 83). The cult of Jesus followed a similar trajectory from persecuted minority cult to imperial patronage over a similar time-scale. **The Jewish Jesus cult followed in the footsteps of the Persian Mithras cult, growing in popularity from its conception at the beginning of the first century until 350 years later, in the middle of the third century, it had large numbers of followers throughout the Roman Empire and was adopted by the emperor Constantine. Within 50 years Christian Literalism was the party line of a totalitarian state which dictated to its citizens the one religion that they were permitted to follow.** In the mind of Theodosius, Christianity and citizenship were coterminous and **anyone who denied Christ automatically made himself an outlaw of Roman society**. As Campbell observes, "In the reign of Constantine, Christianity was accorded equal status with the pagan religion of the empire, but half a century later in the reign of Theodosius (379-395) it was declared to be the only religion allowed, and with that the period that has since been known as the Dark Ages was inaugurated by imperial decree" (J. Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*,



1964, p. 389; S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism*, 1985, p. 112).

A common Literalist reaction to the idea that Jesus is a mythical figure is to question its huge success and the rise of Christianity if Jesus is only a myth. This is a valid point that needs to be addressed.

**Answer for yourself:** How do you explain the rise of Christianity without it being founded by an inspirational leader?

**Mithraism provides us with the answer. Christianity became the dominant religion in the ancient world without there being an historical Jesus in exactly the same way that Mithraism, a few decades earlier, had become the dominant religion in the ancient world without there being an historical Mithras.** Mithraism was inspired by charismatic leaders, but none of them was Mithras. In the same way Christianity was inspired by charismatic leaders amongst the original Christians, but none of them was Jesus. **In fact the myth of Jesus was partly based on the myth of Mithras. The two stories are so similar that Literalist Christians claimed that in an attempt to confuse the faithful, the Devil had created the Mithras story by mimicking the life of Jesus in advance of his birth!** Tertullian writes: *"The devil, whose business is to pervert the truth, mimics the exact circumstances of the Divine Sacraments. He baptizes his believers and promises forgiveness of sins from the Sacred Fount, and thereby initiates them into the religion of Mithras. Thus he celebrates the oblation of bread, and brings in the symbol of the resurrection. Let us therefore acknowledge the craftiness of the devil, who copies certain things of those that be Divine."* (Quoted in W. Kingsland, *The Gnosis*, 1937, p. 99; C.W. King, *Gnostics and their Remains*, 1887, p. 123.) Justin Martyr accuses the Mithraists of mimicking the Eucharist even down to the commemoration *"This is my body .. This is my blood ... Do this in commemoration of me."* (Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 1.66). **Not only would Rome mold the "allegorical Christ" into a "historical Jesus" but at the same time incorporate many religious tenants within such a religious system that come right out of their own sun worship. This website just linked will reveal to you how the "historical Jesus" as depicted on the pages of the New Testament is the replay of Sun Worship that has been "literalized" when again such religious beliefs were best understood by the Ancients in ONLY an "allegorical and a symbolic fashion" as a representation of "the Divine". If you in your studies come to understand this tragic departure from an allegorical understanding of God to a literalistic understanding of God then you realize just how much Divine Truth we have lost due to Rome which the Ancients possessed and just how far we have strayed from God today!!!**

It seems extraordinary that the Roman world embraced the Mysteries of Rome's enemies, the Persians and Jews. But the vast majority of inhabitants of the empire were not Romans, of course, and had little sympathy for them. The cults of Mithras and Jesus spread so successfully precisely because they fed on conquered peoples' resentment of the Romans and represented a form of acceptable dissent. Roman emperors were concerned above all with uniting their disparate colonies. Mithraism, Christianity and other popular Mystery cults were adopted by the state, regardless of their national origins, in an attempt to bring coherence to a fragmenting empire. Christian Literalism was an ideal candidate for the job. It was exactly what a Roman despot like Constantine required - a populist and authoritarian religion which had freed itself of Gnostic radicals.

**Although Christian Literalists rejected the Gnostic Inner Mysteries of Christianity, they continued unwittingly to portray Christianity as a Mystery cult.**

Phrases such as *"This is known to initiates"* continued to be routinely used, but they were now little more than empty words. The phrases "Mysteries that make men freeze with awe" and "This is known to initiates" are repeated in many of the Greek sermons written in the fourth and fifth centuries (J. Campbell, *Papers From the Yearbook*, 1955), p. 367). **With Paganism out of the way, Christianity no longer had to hide its debt**

**to the Mysteries.** As Christian Literalism grew in power it adopted more of the trappings of the Pagan Literalism it replaced. **Christianity's ritual processions were identical to those of the Pagan cults.** Christian initiates were led naked to baptism and afterwards they put on white garments and a sign of the cross was made on their foreheads with oil. The procession then returned to the Basilica with each initiate carrying a candle and in the Alexandrian liturgy also wearing a crown. As d'Alviella states: "It is precisely the Eleusinian procession where the Mystics dressed in white, wearing a crown on their heads and carrying a torch in their hands, pass by singing hymns on their way to the sanctuary" (G. D'Alviella, The Mysteries of Eleusis, 1981), p. 114.) The descriptions of this procession by the Christians Chrysostom, Cyril and Dionysius the Areopagite could be placed next to those of Pagan authors like Claudius, Themistius and Plutarch. Although Jesus had specifically said, "Call no man father", **Christian Literalists adopted the Mithraic practice of calling priests "father".**

***Matt 23:9 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. (KJV)***

In imitation of the Mithraic bishops, Christian bishops wore a "mithra" or "mitre" and carried a shepherd's staff. Eventually the Bishop of Rome took up the title *Ponifex Maximus*, the ancient name for the Pagan high priest, a title still held by the Pope today. At Ephesus there was the Temple of Artemis, the Great Mother Goddess of Asia Minor, the largest temple ever built by the Greeks and one of the seven wonders of the world. It is no surprise that Theodosius II summoned the council to the city where, only a few years earlier, the Pagan "Mother of God" had previously been worshipped (J. Campbell, Occidental Mythology, 1964, p.410). Soon after the council, legends began to be created that Mary and John retired to Ephesus after the crucifixion.

## THE ROMAN ATTACK ON GNOSTICISM AND ALLEGORICAL CHRISTIANITY

**As their confidence grew, Literalists' attacks on Gnostics became ever more virulent, creating the distorted picture of Christian Gnosticism still prevalent today. In a classic case of psychological projection, the Gnostics were misrepresented as the diabolical heretics that the Literalists had actually become.** Although it was Literalists themselves who were preaching an exclusive religion and arrogantly condemning all other faiths as evil, they accused the Gnostics of being "puffed up" sectarians and **named themselves the "Catholic" or "Universal" Church.** Although Gnostic philosophy teaches "All is One" and Literalists preach an irreconcilable war between God and the Devil, Literalists portrayed themselves as "mono-theists" and the Gnostics as "dualists". Although it was Literalist Christianity that had begun as a suicide cult, teaching its adherents that the way to salvation was to actively seek a martyr's death, its later followers vilified the Gnostics as world-haters (Tertullian, *Apology*, 50).

Christian Literalists turned their caustic polemics equally against Paganism, which was denounced as a barbaric cult of bloody sacrifice. I find this deeply ironic given the fact that Christian Literalist believe that God had sacrificed his only Son as the sole way of getting the rest of out of hell. When taken literally, it is difficult to imagine a more barbaric idea than that! And for all the undoubted barbarism of Pagan Literalists, it was Christian Literalists, not the supposedly primitive heathens, who presided over the collapse of Western culture into the aptly named Dark Ages. Gibbon's original intention in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was to end with the destruction of Rome by Alaric the Goth and his horde of "barbarians" in 410 CE. **However, on discovering that Alaric was a Christian, the "barbarians" were bands of Christian monks and it was Pagans who were hunted down and killed whilst Christians remained safe in their churches** Gibbon changed his plan. Instead he continued his work until the fall of the Holy Roman Empire at the Reformation.

**This disastrous collapse was precipitated at the end of the fourth century when Christian Literalism, now the only legal religion in the Roman Empire, launched a brutal crusade to completely eradicate its old rivals, Christian Gnosticism and ancient Paganism. In an orgy of violence, armies of fanatical Christian Literalists tore down the architectural wonders of the Pagan world. They built infernal**



**bonfires of books containing the spiritual wisdom and scientific knowledge of the ages. They subjected to grisly torture and a painful death philosophers, priestesses and scientists - anyone who disagreed.**

**Let us look at a few short examples of the eradication of the earliest teachings concerning "the Christ" as believed by the earliest Christians by Rome before they took over and redefined "orthodoxy":**

- "We shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity. We command that those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom We adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of Our own initiative, which We shall assume in accordance with the divine judgement." (Emperor Theodosius, The Theodosian Laws, A.D. 380, quoted on pp.27-28 of Helen Ellerbe's The Dark Side of Christian History, pub. A.D.1995).
- "Orthodox Christians assembled the Bible not to bring all the gospels together, but rather to encourage uniformity. From the plethora of Christian gospels, Bishop Irenaeus compiled the first list of biblical writings that resemble today's New Testament around 180 C.E. By 393 and 397, Bishop Athanasius had a similar list ratified by the Church councils of Hippo and Carthage. By prohibiting and burning any other writings, the Catholic Church eventually gave the impression that this Bible and its four canonized Gospels represented the only original Christian view. And yet, as late as 450, Theodore of Cyrrhus said that there were at least 200 different gospels circulating in his own diocese. Even the Catholic Encyclopedia now admits that the "idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning... has no foundation in history." (Helen Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, p.16, pub. A.D.1995).
- "You know, it's very interesting to think of the history of Christianity. During the first five centuries, there were lots of Christianities, lots of ways of being Christian. And then, in the period of Theodosius in the fourth century, the only religion allowed in the Roman Empire was the Christian religion, and the only form of Christianity allowed in the Roman Empire was the Christianity of Byzantium's throne." (Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth, p.248, pub. A.D.1988).
- "From the very first centuries, what was to become Christian orthodoxy vehemently suppressed those Christians of psychic, shamanic, or visionary temperament called the Gnostics. The authorities of the early institutional Church soon established a strict orthodoxy of doctrine against to which all contrary views were stigmatized as heretical. When in 313 the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official state religion, attempting to syncretize it with various sun-god cults, Christianity was left to deal with the many cults that swarmed within the Roman Empire. The monotheistic zeal to convert and eradicate the diversity of polytheism gave the Church an authoritarian character that has plagued the West ever since with schisms, councils, inquisitions, and witch-hunts..." (Roger J. Woolger, Other Lives, Other Selves, p. 71, pub. A.D. 1987).
- "It may truly be said that the blackest and bloodiest records that history can show us are the attacks of the Orthodox Church upon the Gnostic mystics." (Frances Swiney, quoted by Lloyd M. Graham in Myths & Deceptions of the Bible, p.446, pub. A.D. 1991).
- "The persecuted primitive Church of the second century was to become in the fourth century itself the persecutor, and whereas in the earlier period Gnostics had been able to engage in theological dispute with the orthodox, later they were sought out, excommunicated, and sometimes burnt alive for their heresy." (Stuart Holroyd, The Elements of Gnosticism, p.22, pub. A.D. 1994).
- "... Christians burned down one of the world's greatest [libraries in Alexandria](#), said to have housed 700,000 rolls. All the books of the Gnostic Basilides, Porphyry's 36 volumes, papyrus rolls of 27 schools of the Mysteries, and 270,000 ancient documents gathered by Ptolemy Philadelphus were burned. Ancient academies of learning were closed. Education for anyone outside of the Church came to an end..." (Helen Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, p. 46, pub. 1995).
- "When the great library at Alexandria was ransacked by Christian fanatics in 387... an inestimable wealth of gnostic literature must have been destroyed. Until the nineteenth century the main source of knowledge of Gnosticism was, ironically, in the writings of the Church Fathers, who in their refutations summarized

gnostic texts and often quoted at length from them. In the nineteenth and present centuries a number of original gnostic texts came to light, the most sensational find being an entire library of fifty-two texts discovered at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1946. These, scholars later ascertained, had belonged to an ascetic Christian community which, fearing discovery by the ecclesiastical authorities and the consequences of being charged with heresy, had sealed up their forbidden library in a large jar and buried it in the sand beneath a cliff near their monastery in about the year 360." (Stuart Holroyd, The Elements of Gnosticism).

Freke and Gandy in their Jesus and The Lost Goddess states that "Rome did not stop until they had cut the head off Western culture, leaving it to wander like an amnesiac in an ignorant stupor. They did not stop until they had cut the heart out of Western spirituality, bleeding it dry of its mystical vitality. The corpse of a religion which remained offered nothing but hope of a better afterlife in return for blind belief in its irrational opinions and unquestioning allegiance to power-crazed popes. This tyrannical empire of the soul extended the arm of the state right into the inner sanctum of every individual, denying the right to spiritual autonomy and compelling all to acquiesce or burn. Yet despite this ruthless persecution, Gnosticism survived. It can be suppressed but never eradicated. It is the spontaneous expression of the natural inquisitiveness and enthusiastic exuberance of the human soul. It is the unquenchable thirst for truth and the undeniable urge to enjoy. It is the spirit of liberty, equality, love and insight. It is the force of life. It always reasserts itself" (T. Freke, and P Gandy, Jesus and The Lost Goddess, 2001, p. 45-46).

Let us continue our study in the fourth and final article in this series.





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## THE TRIUMPH OF LITERAL CHRISTIANITY OVER ALLEGORICAL CHRISTIANITY #4

Most Christians today believe that the gospels of the New Testament present an essentially accurate account of the life of a "historical" Jesus Christ, the 'only-begotten Son of God', who was born of a virgin, wandered Galilee as a preacher and miracle-worker at the start of the 1st century, died on a cross to redeem the sins of mankind, and then rose from the dead three days later and ascended into heaven. However, as proven on several of our other websites revealing the falsification of the New Testament ([that the depiction of the Jesus as found in the New Testament is founded upon a literal interpretation of Sun Worship](#) as well as the [purposeful mistranslation and misquotation of the Hebrew Scriptures in presenting a false Jewish Messiah](#)) along with presenting the evidences revealing how the four gospels contain such glaring inconsistencies and contradictions that they are clearly not reliable historical reports. So if they are the 'word of God', then God must be terribly confused! I cannot be a perfect absolute Entity such as our Creator cannot get the story straight; we need to look to mankind and especially men with agendas for such a work. Let us take a serious tour of the New Testament and the "Chrsit story" for a moment; one which we should all be familiar by now.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke go to great lengths to show that Jesus is descended from the line of David, as the promised messiah must be according to Jewish beliefs. But apart from agreeing that Jesus was fathered by Joseph, [the two genealogies bear no resemblance to each other at all](#); Matthew lists 28 generations and Luke 43. Furthermore, their relevance is unclear since the authors of the two gospels also say that Jesus was born of a virgin who was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. The virgin birth narrative, as applied to Jesus, is not new and the teaching of a virgin birth was given to many men down through history in order to set them apart from mortals due to the extinguishing achievements accomplished in their life as well as giving them after their death a bigger legacy than already achieved. [The virgin birth teaching is a hoax as any serious study reveals and finds it origin in personified Sun Worship and not Judaism or Jewish Messianism.](#) It is important to note that what we believe to be the [earliest Gospel of Mark which provided the foundation for the other writers of the Gospels fails to mention the virgin birth. Not only that but Paul is completely silent upon any possible virgin birth for his Jesus Christ and we don't find any mention of the virgin birth in any New Testament writings until after Irenaeus after 180 C.E. when we find the Roman refutation of the Gnostic's First New Testament given to us by Marcion.](#) And lastly we again find no virgin birth teachings included in the Gnostic gospel of John. [This is all the more surprising that we find no mention of Jesus' family descent or the virgin birth in the earliest writings which framed the first New Testament \(Pauline literature, and earliest Gospel of Mark which according to the Synoptic Problem and its solution provided the framework and the text for the writing of the later Gospels which would come much later\).](#)

The Holy Spirit was traditionally regarded as feminine. Hence the wry comment made in the apocryphal Gospel of Philip (25): 'Some said "Mary conceived by the holy spirit." They are in error. . . . When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?'

The writer of the Gospel of Matthew tells us that Jesus was born during the reign of King Herod, who died in 4 BCE (before common era). But the writer of the Gospel of Luke states that Jesus was about 30 in the 15th year

**of Tiberius' reign, implying that he was born in 2 BCE, i.e. *after Herod's death*. This writer of the Gospel of Luke is mistaken on several things as we see when he then contradicts himself by stating that John the Baptist and Jesus were miraculously conceived six months apart in the reign of Herod, but that Jesus was born at the time of the census of Quirinius, which took place in 6 CE (common era), thereby creating the miracle of a ten-year pregnancy!**

**Answer for yourself:** How can this be? Are we finding such conflicts because people cannot remember or because the Holy Spirit forgot to sort it out or is it possible that these writers are crafting a "historical Jesus" out of thin air and ascribing to him literal events which never happened in their refutation of the prior Gnostic New Testament that taught only an allegorical Christ?

**The Gospels of Mark (the earliest Gospel used to frame the others according to the solution of the Synoptic Problem) and John do not contain any nativity story, while the nativity stories given by Matthew and Luke have nothing in common except the names of Jesus' parents and the location of his birth in Bethlehem.**

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that the First New Testament given to us by the Gnostic Marcion contained no nativity stories nor did it contain any virgin birth materials?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that these "nativity stories" are taken right from Sun Worship and the personification of Sun Worship and were never literal events in the life of the New Testament Jesus?

John however says that Jesus is from Galilee and that the Jews rejected him because he was *not* from Bethlehem. Only Matthew mentions the guiding star, the three wise men and Herod's murder of all the infant boys in Bethlehem, while only Luke mentions the Roman census, the appearance of angels to the shepherds tending their flocks (in the winter?!) and the shepherds' visit to Jesus.

Matthew says that Joseph and Mary lived in Bethlehem, while Luke says that they lived in Nazareth. Matthew says that they fled to Egypt immediately after Jesus' birth and then went to Nazareth when Herod died, while Luke says they remained in Bethlehem following Jesus' birth so that he could be presented in the temple of Jerusalem eight days later. Only Luke mentions Jesus' amazing exhibition of learning in the temple at the age of 12.

The scene where Jesus drives the traders and moneychangers out of the temple is placed at the beginning of John's narrative but at the end of Matthew's. Mark has Jesus teaching only in the area of Galilee and not in Judea, and only travelling the 70 miles to Jerusalem once, at the end of his life. Luke, however, portrays Jesus as teaching equally in Galilee and Judea, while John's Jesus preaches mainly in Jerusalem and makes only occasional visits to Galilee. There are major discrepancies regarding the names of the disciples. According to Mark, Matthew and Luke (the synoptic gospels), Peter, James and John are Jesus' closest followers. In John's gospel, however, Peter plays only a minor role and James and John are not even mentioned, but there is mention of Nathanael and Nicodemus, who make no appearance in the other three gospels.

Even the events surrounding the all-important crucifixion are not uniformly recorded by the gospels. Matthew and Mark say that Jesus was both tried and sentenced by the Jewish priests of the Sanhedrin, Luke says that Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin but not sentenced by them, while according to John, Jesus did not appear before the Sanhedrin at all. Jesus then goes to his death by crucifixion -- yet Paul and Peter say he was 'hanged on a tree' (Galatians 3:13, Acts 5:30, 10:39). John places Jesus' death on the eve of the Passover, whereas the other gospels place it on the following day. The story of a centurion piercing Jesus' side with a spear is found only in John's Gospel. The gospels give three versions of Jesus' last words: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'\* (Matthew and Mark); 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!' (Luke); and 'I thirst. ... It is finished' (John).

- \*This is a mistranslation of the Hebrew. It should read: 'My God, my God, how thou dost glorify me!' [1]



In John's Gospel there is only one woman visitor to Jesus' tomb, in Matthew there are two, and in Mark three, while Luke writes of numerous women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. According to Mark, when the three women disciples found the empty tomb they saw a young man in a white robe inside, while Luke relates that 'two men in dazzling apparel' suddenly appeared. Matthew, however, paints a far more dramatic picture:

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, his raiment white as snow. (28:2)

In Matthew the resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples in Galilee, where they have been sent by divine decree. According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, on the other hand, the risen Jesus appeared in and around Jerusalem, and according to Acts the disciples were expressly forbidden to leave Jerusalem. The earliest versions of Mark's Gospel end with the fear of the women at their discovery of the empty tomb (16:8). The 'long ending' in which the risen Jesus appears to his disciples, was added later but is now included in nearly all editions of the New Testament. The last chapter of John's Gospel, containing Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, is also a later addition. Luke's Gospel is the only one to include an appearance in Jerusalem in which Jesus convinces his disciples that he is not a mere phantom by inviting them to handle his flesh and bones and by eating a piece of broiled fish!

Matthew and John ignore the ascension of Jesus. Luke mentions it only in one brief verse, a sort of postscript not found in some manuscripts, and it receives an equally cursory mention in the verses later added to Mark's Gospel. Luke places the ascension on the day of the resurrection, and Acts 40 days after (1:3). During his ministry, Jesus repeatedly predicts that the apocalyptic Last Judgement will occur within the lifetime of some of his contemporaries, but nearly 2000 years later the Second Coming has still not occurred, though some fundamentalists continue to proclaim -- rather optimistically -- that 'the end is nigh'!

## THE GNOSTIC LEGACY AND ITS PHASES

It would be interesting to give an exposition of the Gnosticism that for some of the earlier centuries agitated the Christian Church; it will suffice for my purpose here to say that its manifold phases were attempts to reach satisfactory conclusions on the great subjects of man's relations to his Maker, to his fellow-men, to himself, and to the universe--to solve the problems of time and eternity. The Gnostic philosophers in the church show the results of blending the Oriental, the Jewish, and the Platonic philosophies with the new religion. **"Gnosticism, was a philosophy of religion,"** and Christian Gnosticism was an effort to explain the new revelation philosophically (Baur, Ch. Hist. First Three Cent., I, pp. 184-200, Baring Gould's Lost and Hostile Gospels, p. 278). But there were Gnostics and Gnostics. Some of the Christian Fathers used the term reproachfully, and others appropriated it as one of honor. **Gnosis, knowledge, philosophy applied to religion, was deemed all-important by Clement, Origen, and the most prominent of the Fathers.** Mere Gnostics were only Pagan philosophers, but Christian Gnostics were those who accepted the revelation of "the Christ" as a new and divine revelation, and interpreted it by those principles that had long predated the religion of the Jews. **The Gnostics were the first regular commentators on the New Testament.** The Gnostics were also the first practitioners of the higher criticism. It (Gnosticism) may be regarded as a half-way house, though which many Pagans, like Ambrosius or St. Augustine, found their way into the church." The Valentinians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, Manichæans, Marcionites and others were Christian Gnostics; but Clement, Origen and the great Alexandrians and their associates were Gnostic Christians. **In fact, the Gnostic theories sought a solution of the problem of evil; to answer the question, "Can the world as we know it have been made by God?"** "Cease," says Basilides (Stieren's Irenæus V, 901-3. Clem. Strom. IV, 12), "from idle and curious variety, and let us rather discuss the opinions which even barbarians have held on the subject of good and evil. I will say anything rather than admit Providence is wicked." **Valentinus declared, "I dare not affirm that God is the author of all this."** Tertullian says that Marcion, like many men of our time, and especially the heretics,



"is bewildered by the question of evil." The generally accepted Gnostic view was that while the good would at death ascend to dwell with the Father, the wicked would pass through transformations until purified. Says Prof. Allen: *"Gnosticism is a genuine and legitimate outgrowth of the same general movement of thought that shaped the Christian dogma. Quite evidently it regarded itself as the true interpreter of the Gospel."* Baur quotes a German writer as giving a full exposition of one of the latest attempts "to bring back Gnosticism to a greater harmony with the spirit of Christianity." Briefly, sophia (wisdom), as the type of mankind, falls, rises, and is united to the eternal Good. Baur says that Gnosticism declares that "either through conversion and amendment, or through utter annihilation, evil is to disappear, and the final goal of the whole world process is to be reached, viz., the purification of the universe from all that is unworthy and perverted." Harnack says that Gnosticism "aimed at the winning of a world-religion. The Gnostics were the theologians of the First Century; they were the first to transform Christianity into a system of doctrines (dogmas). They essayed to conquer Christianity for Hellenic culture and Hellenic culture from Christianity (Outlines of the Hist. of Dogma, pp. 58,9).

Differing from the so-called "orthodox" Christians on many points, the three great Gnostic sects of the Second Century were in full agreement with Clement and Origen and the Alexandrine school, and probably with the great majority of Christians, in their views on human destiny ([the Basilidians](#), [the Carpocratians](#), [the Valentinians](#)). They taught the ultimate holiness and happiness of the human family, and it is noteworthy that though all the Gnostics advocated the final salvation of all souls, and though the orthodox fathers savagely attacked them on many points, they never reckoned their Universalism as a fault. This doctrine was not obnoxious to either orthodox or heterodox in the early centuries.

But by the fourth century the Roman Church in the West had condemned anything Gnostic as heresy but in the Eastern Church, based in Constantinople, the original Christian spirit survived a little longer. Sages such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzum, Evagrius of Pontus and Diodochus of Photice continued to teach the oral tradition of "private secret teachings" to those initiated into the Inner Mysteries of Christianity."

Lets look at one example. Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, 28.66, states: *"...which our holy fathers have preserved in a silence ... to safeguard the sacred character of the Mystery. The uninitiated are not permitted to behold these things, their meaning is not to be divulged by writing it down".* These sentiments can be exactly paralleled by Pagans writing about their Mysteries. These Christian mystics and Christian Gnostics understood the Bible allegorically, explaining that, ultimately, the secrets of the scriptures can only be revealed "thanks to the Gnosis". They emphasized devotion to Mary as the manifestation of Sophia and taught that the goal of Christianity was "to become God" (*Selecta in Psalmos*, op. cit.). Devotion to Mary found its supreme expression in the Byzantine liturgy. Eastern Mariology was to exert a decisive influence on the West in the medieval period (J. Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*, 1996), p. 105) . It is also significant that the great basilica built in the new Christian city of Constantinople was named "Hagia Sophia". Like Aristotle, who noted that initiates attend the Mysteries not to learn something, mathein, but to experience something, pathein, so Basil of Caesarea distinguished between the public teaching of the Church and the deeper meaning of biblical truth which could only be apprehended through religious experience and expressed in symbolical form. (K. Armstrong, op. cit., 133-4).

All the great themes of mysticism elaborated by Origen were continued in the work of the Cappadocians, Basil (329-379), his brother Gregory (335-95) and Gregory of Nazianzum (329-91). Gregory of Nyssa coined the paradoxical phrase "dazzling darkness" for God, writing that every concept of God becomes a false idol which cannot reveal God himself (Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, 3). Basil of Caesarea made the same distinction as Philo between God's essence, *ousia*, and his activity, *energias*, in the world. "We know our God only by his *energias* but we do not undertake to approach his *ousia*" (Basil, *Epistle*, 234.1.) As Armstrong notes, this would be the keynote of all future theology in the Eastern Church (K. Armstrong, *A History of God*, 1993, p. 135). Evagrius (d. 399) and Diodochus (early fifth century) were both Eastern "Hesychast" mystics whose



writings continued the Gnostic tradition of Clement and Origen. **Just as Clement called the Christian "the true Gnostic"** (Clement, *Strom.*, 7.1), Evagrius writes that the secrets of the scriptures can only be revealed "thanks to the Gnosis" (*Selecta in Psalmos* commentary on verse 16, *Psalm 138*). More categorically, he asserts: "It is Gnosis that heals the mind" (L. Bouyer, *The Christian Mystery: From Pagan Myth to Christian Mysticism*, 1990, p.219).

**In the West, the spirit of Christian Gnosticism was smuggled back into the mainstream Church via mystical writings attributed to Dionysius, a co-worker of Paul (Acts 17:34).**

*Acts 17:34 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. (KJV)*

Today these treatises are generally thought to be the work of an unidentified sixth-century monk who deliberately took the pseudonym "Dionysius" to claim authority for what would otherwise be condemned as heretical works. The writer is thought to have been a pupil of the Pagan Gnostic Proclus, the last master of the Platonic Academy, which the Christian emperor Justinian had forcibly closed down in 529, ending a prestigious 1,000-year history. However, in the light of the fact that the Gnostics were the first Christians, it is possible that this view will come to be seen as mistaken and that these texts are at least based on the works of a first-century Gnostic master, as they claim to be.

**It is important to again not that this Dionysius is unconcerned with an historical Jesus.** His Jesus is a symbolic representation of the *Logos*. Adolf von Harnack wrote that for Dionysius *"the historical Christ is a symbol of the universal purifying and sanctifying activity of the Logos and little more"* (quoted in Pseudo-Dionysius (1987), 20). **According to Dionysius, there are two Christian gospels, the familiar teachings of the Church and a secret gospel, which is "symbolic and presupposes initiation" and "must never be divulged to the uninitiated"** (Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, 1.597c. 296.58).

**Answer for yourself:** What could be so damaging that it was never to be divulged to anyone other than "initiates"? The fact that there is no historical Christ Jesus.

There is a useful resume of this in K. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 147. He eulogizes the wonders of the "divine enlightenment into which we have been initiated by the secret tradition of our inspired teachers" (Ibid., 1.592b, 296.52). **The narratives and symbols of Christianity have one meaning to the uninitiated and another to the initiated:**

*"Don't suppose that the outward form of these contrived symbols exists for its own sake. It is a protective clothing, which prevents the common multitude from understanding the Ineffable and Invisible. Only real lovers of holiness know how to stop the workings of the childish imagination regarding the sacred symbols. They alone have the simplicity of mind and the receptive power of contemplation to cross over to the simple, marvellous, transcendent Truth the symbols represent."*  
(Dionysius, *The Letters*, 1,105e-d).

These writings were extremely influential. No other works were so frequently translated or had so many commentaries written on them, apart from the Bible and *The Consolations of Philosophy* by Boethius, which was another text through which the spirit of Gnosticism survived in the Dark Ages of Literalism. (Pseudo-Dionysius, op. cit., 33ff). Both Alfred the Great and Queen Elizabeth I made translations of it. Chaucer and Sir Thomas More wrote imitations of it. Its influence is to be found in the oldest English poetry of pre-Conquest times and is marked in Chaucer, Gower, Spenser and many other later poets. In Italy, Dante makes Thomas Aquinas point out the spirit of Boethius in Paradise. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is in fact a great elaboration of the Neoplatonic concept of the ascent of the soul to God, ending with a reference to Boethius' "the love that moves the sun and other stars" (*Paradiso*). Condemned for heresy by the Christian emperor Theodoric, Boethius describes languishing in prison, where he is visited by Sophia herself, who instructs him in philosophy. Despite



his vision of the Goddess and never mentioning Jesus once, due to the immense popularity of his writings Boethius was later claimed by Christian Literalists as one of their own. As Watts observes, "Was Boethius a Christian, and if so why does the *Consolation* lack all reference to the faith that should have been his greatest consolation in the hours of imprisonment and pending death?" (V.E. Watts, intro, to Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, p. 14). As for the man himself, Theodoric had him tortured and then bludgeoned to death for heresy.

Despite the Literalist Church's unrelenting attempts at suppression, some "heretical" schools of Christian Gnosticism continued to teach. Paulicians survived into the tenth century, Manicheans into the thirteenth and Simonians into the fourteenth (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, 1987, p. 374; Y. Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions From Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*, 2000, p. 39). As Toynbee writes, *"The substantial identity of the Paulician, the Bogomil and the Cathar faith is not in doubt. The common features are too similar and too numerous to be explained away as fortuitous, and it is clear that we are in the presence of a single religion masquerading under different names in different places"* (A. Toynbee, *A Study Of History*, 1939, p. 624). In the Balkans, from the tenth to fifteenth centuries the Paulicians flourished as "Bogomils", meaning "Friends of God" - the traditional name for Gnostics first used by the Pythagoreans. The Paulicians praised Paul as 'the Apostle', professed a Docetic Christianity and worshipped Mary not as the mother of Christ but as the Heavenly Jerusalem (Stoyanov, op. cit., 105). The Bogomils are thought to have arisen from a sect of Paulicians from Asia Minor who in c. 872 were compulsorily settled in Macedonia. Despite intense persecution, the Bogomils retained a powerbase in Serbia and Bosnia until the fifteenth century (Rudolph, op. cit., p. 375). The Bogomils even had their own Gnostic Pope. At the anti-Bogomil council of 1211 they were accused of performing "unholy mysteries like the Hellenic Pagan rites (Patriarch Germanus (1220-40) warned the citizens of Constantinople against the "dark mysteries" of the "satanic Bogomil heresy" (ibid., p. 184).

In the twelfth century the Bogomils developed into the Cathars or "Purified Ones" (The word "Cathar" derives from the Greek for "purity". As a synonym for initiates it can be traced back to the Orphic *Gold Leaves* c.400 BCE, where souls who are absolutely pure, *katharai*, are said to escape reincarnation and go directly to the fields of Persephone to become gods. (*Gold Leaves*, A2-3, lines 6-7). The Manichaeans also called themselves "The Pure Ones" (Y. Stoyanov, op. cit., p. 116). The earliest certain indication of medieval Cathars is the disclosure in 1143 of a heretical community in Cologne. The Cologne sectarians claimed that they had numerous adherents "throughout the world, particularly among the clergy and the monks" and that their religion had persisted in secrecy "from the time of the martyr" (Y. Stoyanov, op. cit., 1994, p. 155-6). Catharism was for many years the prevalent form of Christianity in large areas of France, Spain and Italy. Bogomil ideas had penetrated into Italy and France by the middle of the eleventh century (Y. Stoyanov, op. cit., 1994, p. 193). Between 1150 and 1300 Catharism was the dominant religion of southern France and northern Italy (where Cathars were known as Patarenes). *The Cathars called themselves "the Friends of God" and condemned the Literalist Church as the Church of the Anti-Christ.* In the Platonic tradition, "Friends of God" became a synonym for initiates (Plato, *Timaeus*, 24, and Plotinus, *Enn.*, 2.9.9). Theo of Smyrna (*Mathematica*, 18) declared "friendship with divinity" as the highest level of initiation. The Cynic Crates stated: "For everything belongs to God, friends have everything in common, and the wise are friends of God" (R. M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*, 2000, p. 152).

*Exodus 33:11: "And the LORD spake unto Moses (Pharaoh of Egypt) face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend"*

They claimed to be the living inheritors of the true Christian heritage that had persisted in secret and which still had large numbers of adherents "throughout the world" (Stoyanov, op. cit., 1994, p. 155-6).

Like the original Christians, the Cathars were vegetarians, believed in reincarnation and considered the Old Testament god Jehovah to be a tyrant. *Like Simon and Marcion they considered the God of Jesus and the New Testament to be benevolent but the Old Testament God to be a tyrant.* *Pistis Sophia*, an early Christian gospel, explains that Christ taught "through the mouth of our brother Paul" (G.R.S. Mead,



**Fragments of a Faith Forgotten**, 1906, p. 499). **The Cathars maintained this tradition, claiming that Jesus was "not ever in this world except spiritually in the body of Paul"** (Raynaldus, *Annales*, in S.R. Maitland, 1832, p. 392-394).

The Cathars were respected for their goodness, even by their opponents. The Catholic Bernard of Clairveaux writes:

"If you interrogate them, no one could be more Christian. As to their conversation, nothing can be less reprehensible, and what they speak they prove by deeds. As for the morals of the heretics, they cheat no one, they oppress no one, they strike no one." (H.E. Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History*, 1995, 72-).

**Despite this, the infamous Inquisition was set up by the Literalist Church specifically to eradicate the Cathars, which it did with ferocious enthusiasm, burning alive men, women and children.** From 1139 onwards the Roman Church began calling councils to condemn the heretics. Pope Innocent III declared that ***"anyone who attempted to construe a personal view of God which conflicted with Church dogma must be burned without pity"*** (Ibid.). In 1208 he offered indulgences and eternal salvation, as well as the lands and property taken from the heretics, to anyone who would take up the crusade against the Cathars. This launched a brutal 30-year pogrom which decimated southern France. Twelve thousand people were killed at St Nazair and 10,000 at Toulouse, to give just two examples.

The inquisitor Bernard Gui instructed that no one should argue with the unbeliever, but "thrust his sword into the man's belly as far as it will go" (Ibid.). At Béziers, when asked how to tell who was a Cathar and who was not, the commanding legate, Arnoud, replied, "Kill them all, for God will know his own." Not a child was spared. The destruction of the Gnostic Cathars culminated on 16 March 1244 when 200 Cathar "Perfects" were burned to death in the fall of Montségur, the last stronghold of Catharism. Gerald Durrell famously called this the "Thermopylae of the Gnostic soul". In 1325 Pope John XXII observed that many Cathars were fleeing to Bosnia, where the Bogomils were still thriving, as if to the "Promised Land". In a grotesque prefiguring of the Nazi terror, Cathars who converted to Catholicism were obliged to wear a yellow cross sewn on their clothes and lost all civil rights, and in eastern Europe the Inquisition used ovens to burn heretics, who were rubbed with grease and roasted alive. If ever proof were needed that the Gnostics were justified in calling Roman Catholicism the Church of the Anti-Christ, here it is. '

Yet despite the persecutions, the Gnostic free spirit could not be extinguished. It inspired the great German master Eckhart, who wrote about Sophia and taught that at the heart of Christianity, Judaism and Paganism there were the same mystical doctrines (Meister Eckhart, *Selected Writings*, Penguin, 1994, xxii). Eckhart (1260-1327) called Plato "the great priest" and his inspiration came from the Neoplatonism of Erigena and Dionysius. In 1329 a Papal Bull condemned his writings, but Eckhart had the good sense to die two years earlier. It inspired the Rhineland mystics Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroek, who also called themselves the "Friends of God". It inspired countless groups of non-conformists, such as the Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit in Europe, who taught: "The gospel contains poetical matters which are not true." In England it inspired the Levellers, Ranters, Diggers and Quakers.

The Gnostic free spirit also inspired many of the great cultural heroes of the West - Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Pico and most of the great minds of the Renaissance, who set up a new Platonic Academy; the Protestant Gnostic Jacob Boehme, who received visions of Sophia; poets such as Blake, Milton and Goethe, who created their own Gnostic myths;~ scientists such as Galileo, Copernicus and Kepler, who revived Pythagoreanism; philosophers such as Descartes, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, who was accused of being a Valentinian Gnostic.

Christian Gnosticism was reinterpreted for the twentieth century by Carl Jung, who along with Sigmund Freud founded psychoanalysis. Jung wrote to Freud that the Gnostics' Sophia was "a re-embodiment of an ancient wisdom that might appear once again in modern psychoanalysis". He asserted, "It is clear beyond doubt that many of the Gnostics were nothing other than psychologists," and began to view mental illness as a failed

initiation. He wrote:

*All my life I have been working and studying to find these things, and these people knew already.*

In his forties, using as a pseudonym the name of the second-century Christian Gnostic Basilides, Jung wrote his own Gnostic scripture called *Seven Sermons to the Dead*. This remarkable text is addressed to the disquieted dead, who have been failed by Christian Literalism and who appear to Jung, wailing, "We have come back from Jerusalem where we have found not what we sought." Jung regarded this work as the wellspring of all his later insights, but although he circulated it amongst his friends, he prohibited its publication until after his death, fearing it would discredit him in the eyes of the scientific establishment.

When the Nag Hammadi library of Christian Gnostic texts was discovered in 1945, Jung's foundation bought one of the collections, now known as the Jung Codex. When translated, these works proved that many of his intuitions about Christian Gnosticism had been remarkably correct. Towards the end of his life he appeared on a television chat show, in which he famously replied to the question of whether he believed in God with the perennial Gnostic assertion: *"I know that God exists. I don't need to believe, I know."*

## THE LITERALIST LEGACY

The triumph of Christian Literalism was a spiritual and cultural disaster from which we are still recovering. After the civilized exterior of "Christian culture in Germany had been ripped open in the twentieth century by Hitler's Nazis, Jung wrote:

"Christian civilization proved hollow to a terrifying degree: it is all veneer, but the inner man has remained untouched and therefore unchanged. Yes, everything is to be found outside - in image and in word, in Church and Bible - but never inside."

When Literalist Christianity exiled the Gnostic Inner Mysteries, it lost its soul. It became a bastion of the "hypocrites" which the Gnostics portrayed Jesus as mocking in their gospel story - ecclesiastical autocrats who imposed their dogmas with threats and maintained their power through violence, politicians dressed up as priests who justified the laying waste of whole continents and the enslaving of millions.

Literalist Christianity is often credited with inspiring positive social reforms in Western society. But the truth is that the driving impetus for humanitarian change has come from humanists and non-conformists. The conservative forces of the established Churches have resisted every step towards greater compassion, from the ending of slavery to the abolition of the death penalty. In recent decades, unable any longer to simply bully us into submission, Literalist Christianity has developed a gentler, more attractive face. Yet its darker side continues to be a nefarious force in the world. A recent report estimated there are at least 8,000 "missionaries" active in Guatemala alone, many of whom openly collaborate with the brutal secret police and the military in their oppression of the indigenous people. Typifying the spirit of Christian Literalism throughout the ages, one preacher from the missionary group El Verbo justified this with:

"The army does not massacre Indians. It massacres demons and the Indians are possessed by demons."

In many European countries, however, the power of Literalist Christianity is finally waning. Congregations are dwindling dramatically and churches are being sold off as houses. Science is fast becoming the dominant worldview. This has provoked two very different reactions from those unwilling to consign Christianity to the rubbish bin of history - "Fundamentalists" are desperately endeavouring to retreat to the old certainties, whilst others are attempting to rework the figure of Jesus to fit new times. (T. Freke and P. Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess, 2001, p. 46-50).

## DOCETISM



This proliferation of Jesuses is not a new situation. According to the Literalist Hippolytus, all Gnostics had "their own particular Jesus". Now all these heresies have their own peculiar Jesus; but he is seen differently according as the place is different towards which, he says, each soul is borne and hastens (Hippolytus, *Ref.*, 8.3). **But this was not a cause of conflict and controversy because, for the Gnostics, Jesus was a mythological figure who appeared in the imagination in a form appropriate to the individual, according to their level of spiritual awareness.** There is a useful discussion of Docetism (the Gnostic doctrine of Jesus as a symbolic visionary figure) and its relevance "to the contemporary discussion of the historical Jesus" in Price, op. cit., 16ff. *The Gospel of Philip* explains:

*"Jesus does not show himself as he really is, but he shows himself as people are able to see him. He shows himself to all. To the great he appears great. To the small he appears small. To the angels he appears as an angel, and to men as a man. Hence the Logos conceals itself from all. Some indeed see him and realize that they are seeing themselves"*(*The Gospel of Philip*, NHC, 2.3.58).

In *The Acts of John*, John and his brother James see Jesus beckoning to them, but one sees a beautiful man and the other a little child. Later, for one of them the figure becomes "rather bald-headed but with a thick flowing beard" and for the other "a young man with an immature beard" (*The Acts of John* 88-9). In *The Acts of Peter*, Peter relates, *"I saw him in such a form as I was able to take in."* He teaches a group of widows how to see Jesus:

*"See with your mind what you do not see with your eyes. And though your eyes be closed, yet let them open in your mind within you"* (*The Acts of Peter* 20-1).

The widows become "senseless with bewilderment" and all experience Jesus in a different way. Some say they saw "an old man who had such a presence we cannot describe it to you". Others say, "We saw a growing lad," and others, "We saw a boy who gently touched our eyes and they opened." Peter remarks:

*"God is greater than our thoughts, as we have learned from these aged widows who have seen the Lord in a variety of forms."* (From *The Acts of Peter*, quoted in Merkur, op. cit., 130).

According to Theodotus, Paul recognized that "each one knows the Lord in his own way and not all know him alike". Paul himself famously experienced Jesus as a vision of light." In *The Apocryphon of John*, John also experiences Jesus as light, but in this case containing a metamorphosing image:

*"I saw in the light a youth who stood by me. While I looked at him he became like an old man. And then he changed his appearance again and became like a servant. There were not many before me, but an image with many forms in the light. And the image appeared through each. And it took three forms. He said to me, 'John why do you doubt? Why are you afraid? You are not unfamiliar with this image, are you? Don't be nervous. I am the One who is with you always.'"*

The Gnostics' doctrine that Jesus is a symbolic visionary figure is known as Docetism. It is misunderstood by Christian Literalists as the bizarre claim that Jesus was some sort of disembodied spook that miraculously appeared to be a man who lived the life described in the gospels. But this crazy idea is just the product of Literalists taking the Gnostics literally. Docetism actually teaches that Jesus is a mutable figure who represents the archetype of the Self and appears in different ways to initiates with

different levels of understanding. As *The Gospel of Philip* says with startling clarity, some 'realize that they are seeing themselves'.

The problem is that at first when someone experiences a relationship with their particular version of Jesus they 'recognize him as their brother and regard all the rest as bastards', as Hippolytus puts it.' Their Jesus is the real Jesus, everyone else's is an impostor. But once the idea of an historical man is abandoned, competing Jesuses are not a problem. Everyone can look down the well and come up convinced that Jesus looks just like

them , and that doesn't conflict with everyone else doing the same. We can all have a different Jesus. The whole point of a mythological figure is that it can be adapted to suit different people and changing times.

What unites Fundamentalists and Fantasists is their obsession with the idea of an historical Jesus. We are suggesting a radical alternative: freeing ourselves from the futile preoccupation with history and returning to the original Christians' understanding of Jesus as the hero of a powerfully transformative allegorical myth.

## THE REAL JESUS IS A RED HERRING

We fully understand how difficult it is to doubt the existence of someone whom millions believe to be the most important human being ever to have lived. Many of us have been brought up since childhood with a vivid picture of the historical Jesus. Mention his name and we can almost see him in his rough white robes with long flowing hair and beard. Yet the earliest representations of Jesus actually portray him beardless, with short hair, wearing a Roman tunic.<sup>4</sup> Paul explicitly writes that 'Flowing locks disgrace a man,' so presumably he did not share our modern image of the Christ!<sup>46</sup>

The now ubiquitous image of the bearded long-haired Jesus did not become established until the eighth century, when the Eastern Church in Constantinople suddenly produced a 'self-portrait' which had been miraculously created when Jesus wiped his face on a cloth.<sup>47</sup> Not to be outdone, the Roman Church turned up a portrait of a bearded Jesus painted by Luke and later completed by angels. Pilgrims still kneel before this absurd fabrication in the Vatican today, hoping it will in some way bring them to the Truth. The truth is, however, that the picture we have of Jesus is a product of the imagination - our own and that of others before us.

Was there an 'historical' Jesus? The evidence suggests there was not. But to us this emotive issue is really not important. What *is* important is to realize that the Jesus we relate to in our imagination is a mythical 'archetype' through which we can reach the 'Christ Consciousness' within ourselves, because if we are unable to get enough distance from our own fantasies and opinions to see that our picture of Jesus is an imaginative construct, we will never have the self-knowledge necessary to grasp the Gnosis. However, we have to be spiritually ready before we can hear this message as positive rather than negative, as giving us what we have been really looking for rather than taking something away. The teachings of 'the Christ within' are an open secret that only someone who is ripe can really hear.

Many people desperately want to believe in a miraculous saviour who has literally incarnated to rescue them. There is nothing wrong with this. The miracle worker is a stock character of ancient myths, used to inspire hope of something more than the mundane in those unable to see that the whole of life is a staggering miracle. The image of the divine Godman was deliberately designed to appeal to spiritual beginners who have yet to discover that this mythical figure represents their own true identity. Those who are not ready cling to their 'real' Jesus like a life-buoy in the tempestuous sea of existence. To suggest they let go sounds like madness. But the secret teachings of the original Christians were not designed to maliciously deny comfort to simple believers. They are actually offering something infinitely more reassuring than blind belief in historical events. They are offering Gnosis - immediate experiential knowledge of the Truth. The message is not 'Look out, you are clinging to an illusion.' The message is:

'Relax. You are not drowning. You can let go, because life is actually completely safe. Just experience Gnosis and all your ignorance will be dispelled. Just know who you really are and you will have absolutely no fear ever again. Discover the Christ within yourself and you will be always One with God.'

## SUMMARY

+ Christian Literalism developed towards the end of the second century as a minor cult with the unique claim that Jesus had literally lived out the Pagan myth of the dying and resurrecting Godman. Literalists fabricated a lineage to link themselves back to the supposed disciples and forged letters of Paul to make him appear anti-Gnostic.

+ Mirroring the success of the Mysteries of the Persian Godman Mithras, Christian Literalism gradually grew



in popularity, becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. With the full might of the Roman state behind them, Christian Literalists waged a barbaric war against Paganism and Christian Gnosticism, pulling down temples and libraries, burning books and dissidents, and plunging Western civilization into the Dark Ages.

+ The legacy of Christian Literalism has been a misguided obsession with the historical Jesus. The original Christians, however, taught that Jesus is a mythological figure who appears in the imagination in different ways, according to the understanding of the individual.

If the Jesus story is an allegorical myth, what does it mean? If we have lost the secret Inner Mysteries of Christianity, can we rediscover them? By understanding Christianity as part of the broad Gnostic tradition that flourished throughout the ancient world, we have been able to discover the true origins of Christianity. Let's now see if, by examining Christian myths and doctrines in the light of Pagan and Jewish Gnostic philosophy, we can recover the gospel of Gnosis.

61.

62.

63. See *ibid*, 255.

64.

65. In 529 Justinian closed the ancient school of philosophy in Athens whose last great master had been Proclus (412-485), an ardent disciple of Plotinus. Four years later four mystical treatises appeared under the name Denys the Areopagite (see Armstrong, *op. cit.*, 147). According to Dodds, Dionysius' dependence on Proclus is well established. Dionysius reproduces with 'a minimum of Christian disguise the whole structure of Athenian Neoplatonism' and 'transfers to Christ and the Holy Ghost the epithets with which Proclus had adorned his *henads*' (see discussion in Proclus (1963), xxviff). The apparent fraud was a total success - not only did the works escape the ban of heresy that they certainly merited, but they became accepted as an authority second only to Augustine and were the inspiration for nearly all later Christian mysticism. Dionysius' work had a profound influence on Erigena, Albertus Maguus, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, Edward Spenser, Coleridge etc. (see Proclus, *op. cit.*, xxxff). However, in the light of the Jesus Mysteries Thesis, it is worth considering whether these works in some form may indeed be the thoughts of a first-century Christian Gnostic. They were dismissed as later forgeries after the Protestant

Reformation, when scholars first became aware that many ancient writings were in fact forgeries. However, these scholars had the agenda of getting back to what they saw as 'authentic' Christianity and removing what they believed to be later Pagan accretions. The decidedly Pagan/Gnostic works of Dionysius were, therefore, rejected as spurious - and indeed they may be. But books by the Jewish writer Philo were dismissed as forgeries at this time and have since been reinterpreted as genuine. Maybe the works of Dionysius need to be also reconsidered?

89. Birks, W., and Gilbert, R. A., (1987), 71

90. See Ellerbe, *op. cit.*, 83.

91. "The people of this faith viewed the Catholic church as the antichrist or the devil..." See Nicole Brogan, *The Cathars*, at <http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/cathars.html>, also Raynaldus, *On the Accusations against the Albigensians*: 'They said that almost all the Church of Rome was a den of thieves<sup>1</sup> and that it was the harlot of which we read in the Apocalypse.' <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/heresy1.html>

92. See

93. John Tauler (1300-1361), Henry Suso (1295-1365) and John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381) were the leading spirits in the great informal society of the Friends of God. Formed in Strasbourg, the Friends later spread through the Rhenish province and beyond to Switzerland and Bavaria. In 1350 the *Theologia Germanica* was written in Frankfurt by an anonymous 'Friend'. In his youth Martin Luther was deeply inspired by the *Theologia Germanica* and organized its first publication in 1518. Some commentators have seen the Movement of the Free Spirit as the forerunner of the Reformation, see Underhill, E. (1993), 464-5. In Württemberg, a Protestant enclave in southern Germany, the Swabian Fathers, who called themselves 'Free Spirits', anticipated the Romantic philosophy that later flourished in the work of Goethe, Novalis, Holderlin, Schelling and Hegel. One of the most radical of the Swabian priests, Gottfried Arnold, wrote c. 1700: 'It would have been far more beneficial for us and for mankind if those heresies, which were condemned in the Councils and Symbols of the Church, had prevailed and thus prevented the victory of the orthodox system of belief.' See Hanratty, G. (1997), 89. It is a sentiment that Hegel will repeat almost verbatim in a letter to Schelling, who has just written a thesis on the second-century Gnostic Marcion. See *ibid.*, 103.

94. Contemporary document of the 'Brethren and sisters of the fellowship of the Free Spirit and of Voluntary Poverty' cited by Jung in *Aion*, CW, 9.11.139. The 'New Age' of the 'Free Spirit' declared by Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202) was the inspiration for numerous heretical movements - the Concorrici, Waldenses, Poor Men of Lyons, Beghards, Beguines Brothers of the Free Spirit, etc. See Hanratty, *op. cit.*, 47ff.

95. Cohn argued that the extremist Christian sects of seventeenth-century England were a revival of the fourteenth-century heresy of the Free Spirit. Cohn, N., *The Pursuit of the Millennium, Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, London, 1957. See Armstrong, K. (1993), 367.

96. Dante is a key figure in the transmission of the 'Hidden Tradition'. His teacher in alchemy ('the Art by which men become immortal') was Brunetto Latini, see *Purgatorio*, 15.85. *The Divine Comedy* signals its inspiration at the outset in the figure of Vergil, Dante's Pagan guide through the underworld. Just as the Roman poet had encoded many Orphic/Pythagorean teachings in his work, reformulating the Greek esoteric tradition for a Roman audience, so Dante translated the esoteric traditions he had inherited into an epic allegory acceptable to his contemporaries. Whilst Dante's underworld journey owes much to Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, his journey

through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven also drew heavily on Sufism, and particularly on Ibn al-'Arabi's account of the *mi'raj*, the heavenly ascent of Muhammad (see Merkur, D. (1993), 242). This was the Classical period of Islamic civilization and men like Dante were profoundly influenced by the Arabic philosophers such as Averroes and Avicenna. The Moors of Spain reintroduced Neoplatonism, alchemy, Gnosticism and a host of other long-lost traditions to the West.

97. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 many scholars fled to the West with the ancient contents of the Byzantine libraries. Amongst these were Gemistus Pletho (1355?-1452), who announced to astonished Florentines that with the rebirth of Platonism the religious deception of Moses, Jesus and Mohammad was at an end. One of his listeners was the wealthy Cosimo Medici. For over seven centuries no Florentine had spoken Greek, but in a few short years the complete works of Plato, Plotinus, Iamblichus and Porphyry, the Greek playwrights and historians, the Chaldaean Oracles and the Hermetica were assembled and translated by scholars working at the court of Cosimo Medici. A 'New Platonic Academy' was begun by Marsilio Ficino and the 'New Learning', as the revived Pagan knowledge was called, became the chief inspiration of the Florentine Renaissance (see especially Cronin, V. (1967), 110). In 1509 Raphael painted *The School of Athens*, which famously depicted Leonardo as Plato presiding over the reborn Academy. Other famous persons identified in the work include Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Pythagoras, Euclid, Alcibiades, Diogenes, Ptolemy, Zoroaster and, of course, Raphael himself.

98. The Wisdom tradition of Sophia exerted a profound influence on the alchemical theosophy of Boehme (1575-1624), for whom she was the mirror of God's will. 'There is nothing in Heaven or Earth which did not, at the beginning, become manifest in this mirror.' See Matthews, C. (1992), 268ff. 'Lady Alchemy' became a synonym for the Sophianic tradition. Boehme exerted a profound influence on Henry More, Isaac Newton, William Blake



and William Law.

99. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was the flower of the German Romantic movement.

His inspiration lay in the works of Eckhart, the Friends of God and the revival of

Pagan learning engendered by the Italian Renaissance. His masterwork, *Faust*, is a

Gnostic fantasy that represented for Jung the ultimate expression of the alchemical quest.

100. The theologian Christian Baur was the first to argue that Hegel's system was a modern version of early Gnosticism, and particularly of the system of Valentinus. *See especially* Hanratty, op. cit., 81ff, 'The Gnostic Synthesis of G W F Hegel'.

101. Quoted in Hoeller, S. A., (1982), 16. *See* Matthews, op. cit., 321.

102. *See* Jung, C. G., op. cit., 9.14.1.347, *also* Segal, R. A. (1992), 34.

103. Jung, quoted in Segal, 246.

104. *Sermo I*, *see* *ibid.*, 181ff.

105. It was written in 1916 and circulated privately to friends, including Hermann Hesse, who wrote *Daimian* under its influence. At Jung's request it was excluded from his *Collected Works*.

106. Jung in the *Face to Face* interview, quoted in Segal, op. cit., 52.

107. Jung, C. G., *Psychology and Alchemy*, CW, 12.1.12-13. *See* Jung (1953), 12.

108. The Inquisition, which had been formed specifically to repress the Cathars, was licensed by the Church to torture heretics in 1252 (Stoyanov, Y. (1994), 187, and Ellerbe, H. E. (1995), 83ff) and subsequently went on to have a grisly future in Spain and the Spanish territories in the New World. In 1570 it was established in Peru and Mexico and natives who did not convert to Christianity were burned like any other heretics (*see* Ellerbe, op. cit., 88). In Goa in India the Inquisition murdered 4,000 people during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It continued to operate in some parts of the world until the middle of the nineteenth century.

109. *See* Potter, H. (1993). Potter demonstrates that the Anglican Church embraced abolition of the death penalty 'only at the eleventh hour'. Slavery is endorsed in the Old Testament. *Leviticus* 25:44 states that Israelites may buy slaves from the nations that surround them. It is also endorsed by the forged Pastoral Letter *1 Timothy*, which counsels acceptance of slavery by both slave and master (5:1). William Wilberforce noted that the Church clergy obstructed the anti-slavery cause while Nonconformists and 'godless' reformers were his staunchest allies. *See* Trevelyan, G. M. (1944), *also* Wells on 'Social Ethics' (1999), 232ff, and 'The Inquisition and Slavery' in Ellerbe, op. cit., 76ff.

110. Bernhardt, R., *Christianity without Absolutes*, SCM, 1994, 9

111. In 1999 the Church of England stopped publishing church attendance figures due to their precipitous decline. In the same year Archbishop Carey declared that the Church would be extinct 'within a generation'.

112. Although now applied loosely to all theological conservatism, the term was originally applied specifically to a group of American Protestants who, in 1910, published a series of tracts, *The Fundamentals*, setting out the conservative theological position. Their aim was to oppose 'liberal' theology of the time. The essential feature of all Fundamentalism is its unshakeable dogmatism. *See* Gilbert, R. A.

(1993), 12.

113. Tertullian, *DP*, 43. Likewise Irenaeus castigates knowledge, *scientia*, and claims that only 'Holy Writ' should be the study of 'sound, safe cautious reason'. (Irenaeus, *AH*, 2.26.2k 2.27.1. See Rudolph, K. (1987), 373.) Augustine perfectly articulates the triumph of dogmatism over reason: 'Nothing is to be accepted except on the authority of scripture, since greater is that authority than all powers of the human mind.' With the triumph of this kind of Christianity the curtain came down on the Western scientific tradition and the Dark Ages began. See *TJM*, 304.

114. 2 *Corinthians* 3:6

115. *Genesis* 7

116. *Ibid.*, 38:9

117. *Exodus* 7-11

118. *Ibid.*, 12, 17:8-16, 21:20-1 and 32:27-9

119. 1 *Samuel* 5:8,9

120. *Leviticus* 27:28. An example is in *Judges* 11:30-9.

121. *Deuteronomy* 7:2, 20:16

122. *Numbers* 15:32-6, 16:49

123. *Ibid.*, 21:3,6, 21:35, 31:9,17,18

124. The followers of Mani also composed a treatise like the *Antitheses*, a juxtaposition of Old and New Testament texts designed to prove that the 'Just God' of the Old is not the 'Good God' of the New. Mani's understanding of the role of Jesus strongly resembles that of Marcion (see Lieu, S. N. C. (1985), 39). Interestingly, the forged letter of 'Paul' to Timothy warns: 'O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and contradictions (*antithesis*) of gnosis, falsely so called.' (*1 Timothy* 6:20. See Lacarrière, J. (1989), 100.)

125. *Leviticus* 15:19-24

126. *Ibid.*, 25:44

127. *Ibid.*, 10:10

128. *Exodus* 35:2

129. *Deuteronomy* 21:18-20

130. *Hebrews* 8:13

131. Other options include: a Cynic-like sage in the works of Mack, Crossman, Downing and others; a liberal Pharisee or a loosely orthodox Hasid in the work of Falk and Vermes; a magician in the work of Morton Smith; a magic mushroom in the work of Allegro. Further Jesuses on offer include priestly zealot, proto-feminist, exorcist, healer, prophet, demi-god, etc., etc. (see Price, R. M. (2000), 14). The very number of Jesuses who can be constructed out of 'the available evidence' is testimony to how scanty and ambivalent this evidence really is.

132. On 26 March 1997, 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult were found dead. They had been told that if they



**?shed their containers' (their bodies), they could board a UFO travelling behind comet Hale Bopp. For seats on the next shuttle go to:**

**<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com>.**

**133. Schweitzer, A. (1910), quoted in Price, op. cit., 12.**

**134. ?**

**135.**

**136.**

**137.**

**138.**

**139.**

**140. Pagels, E. (1975), 5-7**

**141. Acts9:3,22:6**

**142. *The Apocryphon of John*, NHC, 2.1,3.1,4.1. See Robinson, J. M. (1978), 105, also Merkur, op. cit., 133.**

**143. *The Gospel of Philip*, NHC, 2.3.58. See also *The Acts of John* 97-102, the discussion of docetism in Rudolph, K. (1987), 158, and the teachings of Basilides in Barnstone, W. (1984), 627.**

**144. Hippolytus, *Ref.*, 8.3**

**145. It was not until the second century CE that long hair became fashionable after its adoption by Hadrian in imitation of Greek philosophers.**

**146. *1 Corinthians* 2:14-15**

**147. A miracle he performed for a Syrian king, who used the portrait to cure his leprosy and defeat his enemies in battle.**



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# DID THE ESSENES AND THEIR MESSIANIC BELIEFS EVOLVE INTO THE GNOSTIC CHRIST?

## THE GNOSTIC CHRIST

In the Gospel of Matthew (16:13) we find a description of Jesus questioning his disciples concerning their view of him. The disciples reply first by describing the opinions expressed by various people concerning the identity of Jesus: *"Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."* According to this version of the story the apostle Peter gives the correct answer and is commended by Jesus by being told that flesh and blood have not revealed this answer to him, but that it came from the Father in heaven.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that there is a quite different one to be found in the Gospel of Thomas from Nag Hammadi that not only predates this later passage but gives a completely different answer as to the identity of the Jesus of the New Testament?

## HOW MANY DIFFERENT JESUS DO WE HAVE?

Well too many that is for sure. Today we have over 2000 different Christian denominations preaching a different Jesus and various different theological doctrines supposedly attributed to or connected to him. As in the days described by Matthew, the characterizations of "Jesus" differ sharply one from the other throughout history. Over the centuries it has been very difficult to determine what the "true" or most accurate concept of the New Testament "Jesus" really entailed. That made it almost impossible to clearly and concisely determine accurately what the early Christians believed about "the Christ" as well as "Jesus," the supposed founder of Christianity. Today we are blessed to have available to us groundbreaking scholarship in the last two hundred years that has "cracked" the mystery of Christ wide open. We are blessed today to see accurately how the New Testament Jesus myth was given life and just how different aspects of the "Jesus" was taught and "believed in" by the earliest "Christians" of the first century. Before we dig in we need to realize that we are first met with a decision upon interpretation right off the bat when examining the "Jesus" of the New Testament as you will come to see or possible already are if you have read other articles in this current website.

This website has devoted a good deal of space trying to show its readers the dichotomy between an "allegorical" interpretation versus a "literal" interpretation of not only "the Christ" but "Jesus" as well. It strikes us strangely having grown up in the Western hemisphere where we have been schooled in a "literalistic" interpretation of almost everything since we were to children to find that the Ancients and the "earliest Christians" were not such literalist but just the opposite; they were allegorists and this is what we find when we come to the writings of the Ancients concerning "the Christ" as well as Joshua-Jesus (another adaptation of a historical event which was projected and portrayed through allegory in the form of Jesus in the New Testament by the earliest Gnostic Christians). It is as simple as this: if we take today a



group of literature that was written with an intended allegorical interpretation by its writers and subject it to a current literal interpretation then we can be assured that what we will learn will not be the truth that the original writers were trying to get across to their readers. Let us refocus for a minute on the name of "Jesus" and the fact that the name Jesus was the Latin for the Hebrew Joshua which means "Yahweh's Salvation". This portray of Yahweh's Salvation through the literary venue of the New Testament Jesus along with the message of this "Christ" is personified allegorically on the pages of our New Testaments and we simply are two thousand years removed from a religious movement that chose allegory instead of a literal venue to express such Divine truths. That is why we miss it; it is like going to an art gallery and looking at a Picasso or a Rembrandt masterpiece from yesterday with 3-D glasses and we get a distorted view yet we are looking at the picture. We see and we think we understand by in reality we don't see the truth of the painting before us and we never know the true message the painter was trying to communicate; or in this instance the writers of two thousand years ago when they wrote of "the Christ" and the personification of a Divine Message in the personified form of "Jesus". The same applies to the picture of "the Jesus" of the New Testament which we have read our whole lives but seldom knew the truth that lies behind the Jesus of the New Testament. Well that is partly because we never knew of a Second New Testament which refutes the earlier Gnostic New Testament and the allegorical Christ when all of this concerning the "allegorical Christ" and the personification of him as "Jesus" in the New Testament is "reinterpreted" as if literal story of a real human being from the get-go and presented to the world after 180 C.E. by proto-Catholicism while at the same time Rome was systematically destroying all evidences of the Gnostic Christ and the Gnostic writings. Our research into Gnosticism as well as what we have presented in this website has proved beyond any doubt that the "Christ" as portrayed through the "Jesus" of the New Testament was **ORIGINALLY** understood allegorically by the earliest Gnostic Jewish and Gentile believers whom we see in the New Testament but we are led to believe otherwise by later Roman additions to the New Testament. But due to the forgery of later collected Pauline works and the "Q" which comprised Marcion's First New Testament, forgery of earlier Gnostic writings by Irenaeus and later proto-literalists that were proto-Catholics who try to present these writings in a anti-Gnostic vein, we are led mistakenly today when reading this literature to approach it in a literal way of interpretation and thereby the truths expressed there become so distorted that we loose the intended message and often slip into idolatry innocently and end up worshipping a man that never existed except in the minds of mystics that shared with mankind their revelations of "the Christ" and Yahweh's Salvation in the first place.

Judaism was a religion with many sects and many varied beliefs concerning a hoped for Messiah. Therefore it is virtually certain that their concepts varied and that no uniform belief about the Messiah, "the Christ", and even Jesus was present in the later evolving Jewish-Christian communities. Our focus in this website has been on the Gnostic Christians which archeology today shows us to be the earliest Christians. Turning to the Gnostic Christians we find that their Jesus was an puzzle, a well-nigh insoluble mystery.

Sometimes they represented him as a man, sometimes as the divine Anthropos (the Adam Kadmon), the wisdom-man who had come to rescue the sparks of light that had fallen into darkness. At times he had a body and a human voice wherewith he uttered many wise sayings (gnosis), at other times he was portrayed with a phantom-body that only seemed like any other (Docetic). Like Paul, the earliest writer on "the Christ" associated with the Christian community, this Jesus was everywhere and everything, he was in a body and without it. He was in the world and outside of it. In the Gnostic *Odes of Solomon* he is made to say the words that still seem true today: *"I seem to them like a stranger because I am from another race."*

**Answer for yourself:** Just who was this Jesus?

## JESUS OVER THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH



**It is amazing what Rome has kept secret and what knowledge they possess and have hidden over the millennia that has not made the light of day; that is until our century. Yet we get glimpses of what Rome knew that they tried to hide and prevent others from knowing down through history; namely that many other nations have known "this Christ" and in their own way "this Jesus" but often which is not described in the current depictions to which we are familiar as Christians and followers of "the Christ" today.** I can remember how startled I was when I discovered over the years that as far back as Egypt and Egyptian religion one can find the concepts of the Logos, the messiah, immortality of the soul, heaven, purgatory, resurrection of the dead, the trinity, sabbath, the eucharist, baptism, the last judgment, etc. The Revelation of God to man all began with Sumer and Egypt and I hope to bring this Egyptian Website to our readers soon as it will be the last website for Bet Emet Ministries. In that my quest to present the ultimate truths behind Christianity will be finished.

Inclusive, mysterious, ubiquitous-like his emulator Paul, this Jesus was all things to all men.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you know that today in the catacombs of Rome we still find a very universal, very Gnostic Jesus that is quite unlike the one you hear about on Sunday mornings in your church?

**Of course Rome never wanted you to know that the Gnostic Jesus was the "first" Jesus of the Christian community and would make unlimited effort to assure that you would never know; from burning the libraries of the world along with the writings of these Gnostics and Gnostic Christians to the murder of millions who would not accept their "literal" Jesus.** Here in the catacombs we are startled to find that Jesus is depicted as a form of Bacchus holding a staff with grapes and surrounded by vines. Also we find that he is a shepherd carrying a lamb on his shoulders. He is the mysterious *Ichthos*, the fish, for which analogy no biblical justification can be found (you have to look to Egypt and the precession of the equinoxes to see this), as one might conjecture in the case of the Good Shepherd and the grape plant, both metaphors which he is said to have applied to himself.

Imagine a time when Christians had no written Gospels but only a spoken tradition of the sayings and stories attributed to "the Christ" and to this "Jesus". This is the "Q" Gospel that so many speak of today. If the Gospel of Q exists, it might best be regarded as a reconstructed pre-Christian Gospel which is believed by many to have been written much earlier than the four New Testament gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John). If this theory is correct, then Q is an extremely important piece of literature. It may contain the earliest descriptions of beliefs, behaviors and expectations of one group of Jesus' followers. The earliest Christian scriptures were the same as the Jewish community and coupled with this "Q" the early Christian community had their oral and written Bible. **When writers in the New Testament refer to "scripture," they mean the Hebrew scriptures of their day and not to the writings of the New Testament that we are so familiar with today. Early Christian interpretations of scriptures used techniques similar to those used by Jewish interpreters, including prophecy, allegory, and typology in expressing Divine truths.** These earliest Christians understood the Scriptures as containing timeless truths that were often almost beyond communication on a human level that the mind could comprehend and therefore they could be made relevant to their contemporary communities only through the avenue of allegory and metaphor. They also believed that divine revelation influenced interpretation and chose to express these timeless truths with symbol and allegory as had the ancients before them. Christians approached scriptural interpretation through their understanding of who "the Christ" was and how he existed both among and within them. At the same time the Hebrew scriptures were understood to be looking forward to the coming of "the anointed one", "the Christ", "the Messiah," who was to be a man and also the fulfillment of prophecy. This to them was to be another manifestation of "Yahweh's Salvation in the form of a human being known to them as "the anointed one". **In a unique way this was to be a "Jesus" but you might be surprised to know "how".**

**Answer for yourself:** What two words can we use to describe this one who is to come; who is to be Yahweh's Salvation & Anointed One? Well that is simple yet few see it. **We are looking for "Yahweh's Salvation" to come or should I say we are looking for "Joshua" in the Hebrew or "Jesus" in the Latin to come in a literal sense as the Jewish Messiah. But these Jewish Gnostics also understood a second**



interpretation of this "Christ" and this "Jesus" that escapes us totally today in Christianity. "Jesus" and "Joshua" are really the same words and both of them, when taken to their root meanings of course mean the same; namely, "Yahweh's Salvation". So in a unique way they were looking for "Joshua-Jesus" to come in the form of the Jewish Messiah as an anointed man sent by God who would come in the power of God and would preform a "Joshua act" or a "Jesus act" and manifest for Israel "Yahweh's Salvation" by providing Israel's deliverance from Gentile domination and punishment. But more than that they understood "Joshua-Jesus" as an **allegory** of the deliverance and salvation that goes on inside one's soul and heart and mind whereby he comes to receive and understand the Divine Revelation of who he is, where he has come from, and to where he will go upon his death; that the Christ lives within him! By that I mean that Yahweh's Salvation lives within him so in a way "Jesus-Joshua" lives within him! This is the concept that Paul expressed by the term **"in Christ"**. This is the mediator between flesh and spirit; between man and God and it is simply the God that lives within. These Gnostic believers understood this link between Spirit and Matter to be the "Christ" within...Christ in you!

**Answer for yourself:** Could it just be possible that the earliest Christians, who we have found through historical study and through the gifts of archeology today to be Gnostics in the first place, were looking not so much for a "man" named Jesus but for the manifestation of "Jesus" [Yahweh's Salvation] in their day and in their lives in a spiritual sense? You need to really think about this concept especially when you consider all the other evidences amassed on this website that reveals the the lack of unforged evidence for a historical Jesus in the first place. And what confuses us and complicates this for the reader and student is that at the same time we realize that in the first century Israel was looking for the historical Messiah of Israel to be manifested as a man which also was to be "anointed" and a "Christ" in his own right. We, once understanding the how the Gnostics understood "the Christ" and "Joshua-Jesus", should see clearly that they were looking for the "anointing" of God that breaks the yoke of human bondage; they were looking Jesus Christ but this was not always to be understood as a "man" but as a Divine principle that was to be manifest to a people persecuted by Rome; first in their own lives in their relationship with God and only secondarily in a historical sense with the coming of an anointed Prophet. So if we see this correctly then we should understand that Israel was in need of Yahweh's salvation and deliverance (both spiritually and physically).

**Answer for yourself:** But was this "Jesus Christ" as expressed in the First New Testament originally meant to be understood as a "human man" or a "spiritual concept" that was later personified as if a man and then taught "literally" as a man by Rome when they refuted and rewrote the First New Testament given to us by Marcion, himself a Gnostic and follower of the Gnostic Paul who taught originally only an allegorical Christ?

**Answer for yourself:** At the same time did the earliest Gnostic Jews who were also looking for a human Messiah understand that this messiah was to be "Jesus" as well since the Messiah was to be a human manifestation of Yahweh's Salvation? In a way "yes" as the Jewish Messiah was to definitely be Yahweh's Salvation to Israel (to be a "Joshua" to them, to be a "Jesus" to them). Note the word play. But even though this is true this must not keep us from understanding that the First New Testament was written to portray an allegorical Christ and a personification of it in the form of this Jesus which was the venue for the the message of the Christ among men. This Christ myth does not mean that it is fiction but rather only that it was through the literary vehicle of allegory and personification that the message of God was captured and portrayed to mankind on a human level; on a level that they could understand and understood in their day since allegory was an accepted manner of writing and preserving truths since time began. Such was how the Ancients wrote which is quite unlike us today since being so heavily influenced by Greece today.

What concerns us in our study here is if the EARLIEST expression of "Jesus" was understood as a man or as an allegory for Yahweh's Salvation that was understood by them to come in many forms; the one to which I am referring is the Revelation of one's true identity as the Gnostics taught originally. By that I meant the revelation that man was the creation of a Divine God and that the very presence of God lived within

his clay vessel. That being so then then man was to come to the Revelation and understanding that his past as a living soul began with God, that his present is the physical manifestation of God as soul-spirit enmeshed and trapped in matter, and that his future and destiny is a return to God from where he came. That being so then man was to sense his responsibility to God to "be ye holy for I am holy". Understand in all of this we are looking for the earliest belief of "the Christ" and "Jesus" as held by the first Gnostic Jews who are appropriately called the first "Christians".

## THE TRIUMPH OF LITERALISM

Beginning in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, this mythos of unceasing, overflowing creativity, allegory, and metaphor as applied to the "Logos" and "the Christ" and "Jesus" [as the Joshua....as the personification of Yahweh's Salvation come to mankind] becomes confined to "literalistic" dogmatic formulations. Because Christianity spread early into the Roman Empire, the early depictions of Jesus were that of a "literalistic" rather than an "allegorical" concept. As missionaries would later take the Gospel to other races and cultures, they took that image of a "literalistic" Joshua-Jesus with them since by now Rome had succeeded in replacing the allegorical First New Testament with a Second "Literalized" New Testament and the knowledge of the earliest Gnostic Christians and their "allegorical" Christ and Jesus was fading from the historical landscape. The writings of the Gnostic Christians were being burned and libraries with them and all traces of the Gnostic Christ were being eradicated by unceasing efforts by Rome. At the Council of Chalcedon, in A.D. 451 the church fathers declare it a dogma, or article of belief, that a human Jesus was the union of the two substances of divinity and humanity, that he was "perfect God of the substance of the Father" and "perfect man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother." The leaders of the Church here tried to rationally define what previously was discerned as a non-rational realization, and their attempt as a matter of inevitable necessity ended in failure.

From this time on the figure of Jesus as "the Christ" as understood by the earliest Gnostic Jews and even Gnostic Gentiles undergoes first a gradual and then an ever more rapid devolution, or deterioration.

An inscription in the Vatican states plainly, "He who will not eat of my body, nor drink of my blood so that he may be one with me and I with him, shall not be saved." This is not terribly surprising, unless you consider that this is inscribed on the remains of the temple the Vatican was built on- one dedicated to the God Mithras. Such eerie parallels between the pronouncements of Jesus and Mithras are not the only similarities between the two religions. Mithras was known to his followers as "The light of the world," or "The good shepherd," and exhorted his followers to share ritual communion. He was reputedly born in a cave, with shepherds in attendance, on the twenty-fifth of December.

**Answer for yourself:** Is it just coincidence? Consider this- several other Gods share the December birthday- they are also solar deities, who are born in the winter solstices of virgin mothers, die, and are reborn. One of these, Attis, is known to his followers as "The lamb of God," and his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection were celebrated annually, with ritual communions of bread and wine. His virgin mother, Cybele, was worshipped as "The queen of heaven."

Thousands of years before Jesus, there was a passion story told about a God man, born of a virgin mother, in a stable. He travels about with his followers, preaching and performing miracles, until one day he allows himself to be arrested and tried for blasphemy. He is found guilty and executed, only to rise from the grave three days later, where the women weeping at his tomb do not recognize him- that is, until he assumes his divine form as the God Dionysus.

Common to all of these 'mystery' religions (so called because one was required to be initiated or baptized into the faith to learn its doctrines), including early Christianity, are themes of rebirth, redemption, and the transmission of life-changing information. So many religions in those times shared similar themes with that usually the deities became melded together. Early depictions of Jesus show him holding the Lyre of Orpheus, or



driving Apollo's chariot. A talisman bearing the crucified likeness of Osiris-Dionysus is inscribed Orpheus/Bacchus. It is impossible to tell just by looking at old artwork which haloed infant gods are cuddled in the arms of which mothers. The Emperor Constantine, who legitimized Christianity in Rome, was a worshipper of Sol Invictus- an amalgamation of solar deities Mithras, Helios, and Apollo-and he recognized Jesus' place in that company almost immediately.

Of course, later Christians were terribly perturbed by these similarities- these coincidences so disturbed one early Christian church father, Justin Martyr, that he accused the devil of sending an imitator of Christ in advance. Had he paid a little more attention to the past, he might have noted that the association of Jesus with Dionysus is not so strange-philosophers had been making connections between Jehovah and Dionysus for centuries.

New Testament authors stuck sly references to Pagan gods throughout the gospels.

**Answer for yourself:** Did early Christians, like their modern descendents, believe that theirs was the one and only true manifestation of religion? Consider the words of Clement, of Alexandria, *"There is one river of Truth, which receives tributaries from every side."* If only the later followers of the religion listened more closely, the mysteries may not have been lost.

What this should tell us is that down through the ages Divine Truth was captured by the means of myth as each of these "pagan gods" are simply manifestations of the true God told through the avenue of personified gods and goddesses which are but symbols of the attributes of the true God. Again we find here allegory, metaphor, and symbol used to capture these Ancient Divine truths and these myths were never meant to be taken literally. The same could be said for but another manifestation of God being described in another culture and another time; namely Jesus of the New Testament. And this is what we see clearly when viewing the earliest New Testament of the Gnostics before it would later be literalized by Rome in the Second New Testament.

This is confirmed by art as well. In the dazzling mosaics of the Byzantine empire, as presently visible in Ravenna and Constantinople, Jesus is still present as a superhuman being of cosmic dimensions; he is still the all-ruling *pantocrator* with orb and scepter, the representative of a transcendental dominion over earthly life. At the same time one cannot escape the conclusion when contemplating these representations that somehow something also has been lost. Before there was "Jesus" the good shepherd we find "Orpheus the good shepherd" or the depiction of "Jesus as Apollo". These two mosaics reveal to us the religious synthesis where by the depiction of Jesus was just one in a long line of prior Ancient understandings of the Divine as it is mediated to mankind through the agency of symbolism, allegory, and metaphor. This is not to be understood literally. Rome will change all of this. Since understanding how the Ancients used allegory to express their religious beliefs about God and His mediation of His love and salvation to mankind we now will focus again on the Joshua-Jesus connection which we find was very important to both the Essenes as well as the later Christian Gnostics.

## THE JOSHUA-JESUS CONNECTION OF THE ESSENES AS WELL AS THE CHRISTIAN Gnostics

The historical Jesus gives way to the Jesus of myth. Scholarship discovers that the image of the crucified Nazarene is intimately connected with a large number of savior gods of antiquity: Osiris, Horus, Tammuz, Mithra, Orpheus, and many others. The confusion and ambivalence surrounding the figure of Jesus stand a good chance of being substantially reduced as the result of some developments of an entirely different nature; namely, the increasing awareness of scholars and laypersons alike concerning the content of the Dead Sea Scrolls which we have at our disposal today which reveals the religious theologies of the Essenes (the precursors of the later Christian Gnostics). As noted earlier, the Essenes of Qumran were the chief carriers of the messianic impulse in Hellenistic Judaism. Their own Teacher of Righteousness described in the

**Scrolls shows so many similarities with the Christian Messiah that the suggestion has been repeatedly put forward that the two might, in fact, be one and the same.** While such statements are little more than exaggerations, the similarities joining the two figures are nevertheless impressive. **In addition to the Teacher of Righteousness, the People of the Scrolls also awaited a coming princely and priestly duo of messiahs,** who together would reestablish the new dispensation of true godliness and righteousness. Indeed it may be said that when it came to messianic expectations and speculations the Essenes were by no means lacking in prodigious talent and accomplishment. What is of concern for us is the link between these Essenes and their "Messiahs" and their evolution later into what can be called Gnostic Christians for it is there that we must focus upon their "Messiah" as well.

**The connections linking Essene messianism with the Gnostic Christian phase of messianic archetypal developments are manifold.** The first of these links concerns the Jewish hero whose name the Christian savior bore. **Joshua or Yehoshva,** son of Nun, the successor of Moses as leader of the Jewish people, was a remarkable man. We have already seen a lot concerning how this Joshua was understood and applied to Jesus by these Gnostics in our prior study of the [Exodus Allegory](#). Joshua, appointed to leadership and successorship by Moses, is indeed confirmed in his position by the God of Israel:

***This day will I begin to exalt thee in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I was with Moses, so will I be with thee (Joshua 3:7)***

Later, after the numerous miracles attending his campaigns, which included the drying up of the waters of the river Jordan, the collapse of the walls of Jericho, and the arrest of the sun and the moon in their courses, his victory is described as the greatest event in the history of the covenant:

***There has been no day like it, before or since, when God hearkened to the voice of man (Joshua 10:14)***

**The most significant function of Joshua, particularly in the eyes of the Essenes, was not so much his miraculous generalship, but his role as the new giver and concealer of the Law.** This is very important for our study because these Essenes held that Joshua sealed the Torah inside the Ark of the Covenant, there to rest for a very long time, until the pious King Josiah (presumably in the seventh century B.C.) in the course of certain reconstructions of the Holy of Holies accidentally discovered it, the discovery being recounted graphically in the second book of Kings. The Essene work known as the *Damascus Document* states that King David had no knowledge of the "sealed book of the Law" for the very reason that it had not been opened since the death of Joshua (*Damascus Document* V. 2-4).

**Joshua, thus, is the one who has concealed the sacred books of the Torah, so that only those worthy should find them at the appropriate time.** The aforementioned synchronistic principle evident in the discovery of important sacred literature is quite clearly expressed in the traditions concerning Joshua. All of this is of great import for our considerations in view of the fact that the **Dead Sea Scrolls clearly show that the Essenes came to regard their Teacher of Righteousness as the new Joshua and his teachings as the "second Torah"** (John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth*, p. 79). Amazingly, even the very mode of **the concealment and preservation of the Scrolls effected by the Teacher of Righteousness seems to have followed the example traditionally set by Joshua, son of Nun. He was following in the footsteps of Joshua....Israel's past redeemer of sorts. Thus the Essenes saw in their Teacher of Righteousness a "new Joshua" or a "new Jesus" of sorts (remember the word play..that Joshua and Jesus are the same words?).** In an apocryphal book, dating back to the first century A.D., called the *Assumption of Moses*, Moses instructs Joshua to anoint the five books of the Law with cedar oil and put them in earthen vessels, **a procedure virtually identical with the one adopted for the preservation of the Scrolls of Qumran** Also, on a parchment sheet found in the so-called Partridge Cave and published by Allegro in 1956, a series of prophetic blessings and curses are to be found. These utterances, all attributed to Joshua, relate to the coming of the Messiah, who is ritually blessed here by his predecessor, while a wicked



builder of the city is at the same time ritually cursed. It takes but little imagination to divine that the Essenes collected these mainly biblical formulae in order to apply the blessings to the Teacher of Righteousness, whom they regarded as the prefiguration of the Messiah, whereas the curses were to apply to the "wicked priest," the precursor of the diabolical opposition to the messianic age of the last days.

What might thus be called the "Joshua connection" is clearly present. We, remembering the Hebrew "Joshua" is the same as the Latin "Jesus" then it is a small step to see that Joshua, son of Nun, or this "Jesus" is the first archetypal prefiguration of the messianic principle: a conqueror, a lawgiver, a concealer, and a preserver of the true Gnosis, or secret doctrine. The historical Joshua is followed by the Essene Teacher of Righteousness, the new Joshua, author of the New Torah, who is murdered by the "wicked priest" and hung or crucified on a tree in the vicinity of Qumran, known on the basis of biblical reference as the "Diviner's Oak" and to the Essenes as the "Teacher's Oak." Now it is very important to recognize that this Teacher of Righteousness leaves behind various prophecies concerning the true and final Messiah (sometimes divided into two figures of the princely and the priestly messiahs).

**Answer for yourself:** What should we expect now; a possible 3rd "Joshua-type" or a 3rd appearance of a "new Joshua" or a "Jesus"? You bet!

## TIME FOR A "THIRD" JOSHUA TO APPEAR

The time is now ripe for the arrival of the third Joshua, namely, Jesus of Nazareth, who is to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor and end up slain in a manner similar to that of the murder of the Teacher of Righteousness. Again, as the writings of the earliest ex-Essenes and now Christian Gnostics reveal this "new Joshua-Jesus", like his predecessor, brings a new Law, or Covenant, and foretells his own second coming for a future period when the final battle between good and evil shall take place. As the first two Joshuas hid their secret doctrines and sealed them hermetically, so that only the right people might discover them at the right time, so the Jesus of the Gnostics subsequent to his Resurrection reveals his own secret teachings, which then are hidden by his followers (albeit perhaps two or three centuries later when these Gnostic writings are buried for safety when Rome was purging the world of Gnostics and their writings), not to be discovered until the twentieth century in the form of the Nag Hammadi gospels.

Truly, this is a mythic pattern of impressive proportions, showing the unfoldment and repeated re-embodiment of an archetype:

The three Joshuas have an organic connection with each other; they are conquering, revealing, sacrificing, dying, and reappearing images of a secret Gnosis that ever seeks its expression, irrespective of the adversities and changes throughout human and Judeo-Christian history.

Before leaving the Joshua connection it may be useful to contemplate a passage from the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* discovered in the Nag Hammadi find:

*Jesus is a concealed name, Christ a revealed name [THINK]. Therefore [this name of] Jesus [as the Latin of the Hebrew Joshua which means Yahweh's Salvation] really does not exist in any other language, but his name is (nevertheless) Jesus, as they might call him thus. But Christ is called the messiah in Syria, but in Greek his name is the Christ.*

The author of this gospel identifies the name "Jesus" as the most limited name applied to the Savior, limited because it makes sense only in the Hebrew language. The conjectural secret meaning of the name "Yehoshva" (Joshua, Jesus) may be as follows: The Hebrew letters Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh compose the Tetragrammaton, or four-lettered name of God. With the insertion of the so-called "holy letter" Shin in the center of the divine name, we get the name of Joshua: Yod, Heh, Shin, Vav, Heh. Gnostic thinking may view this operation as a completion, or rectification, of the name of the Jewish God, because this deity generally appears as an imperfect

demurrage entity in Gnostic scriptures. Joshua (or Jesus, the Latin counterpart) may thus appear as a perfected or more highly evolved manifestation of the Old Testament God, capable of bringing the divine Law unto greater heights of perfection and usefulness. Sanctified by the power of the holy letter Shin, the original divine tetramorph now receives a differentiation that it previously did not possess. In psychological terms one might say that Yahweh becomes conscious in Jesus and that this process of the creator's growth toward consciousness proceeded from Joshua, son of Nun, to the Essene Teacher, and finally culminated in Jesus as understood by the Gnostics. *The Gospel of Philip* clearly states that the name "Jesus" holds a certain secret, but that this secret does not exist in any language other than Hebrew.

Let us not be mistaken about one thing as we read and try to understand the New Testament and its references to "Jesus Christ". The Essenes themselves were very conscious of the archetypal connections of their own teacher with earlier spiritual figures renowned in sacred lore.

**Answer for yourself:** Who were some of these prior spiritual heroes?

Two of these (in addition to Joshua) were the patriarch Joseph and the Levite Asaph of the time of King Solomon:

- Joseph appears to embody the archetypal qualities appearing as the *suffering holy one*,
- Asaph stands for the *inspired seer and miracle worker*.

The Essenes looked upon Joseph as a prefiguration of their Teacher of Righteousness. Significant references to this circumstance can be found in several Essene scriptures, notably in the *Book of Jubilees* and in the *Habakkuk Scroll*, the commentary on the Prophet Habakkuk, which was one of the first three scrolls discovered in 1947. In a scripture not directly related to the Essenes, the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*, in a portion called the Testament of Benjamin, we find a prophecy that various scholars, including Hugh J. Schonfield, related to the Teacher of Righteousness, even though they ostensibly refer to Joseph. Here are some of the conclusions offered by Schonfield in regard to the latter document (Hugh Schonfield, *The Passover Plot: New Light on the History of Jesus* (New York: Bernard Geis Assoc., 1965).

*Under the figure of Joseph we are surely meant to discern someone else, conceivably the True Teacher, who suffered at the hands of lawless and godless men, and whose believed death was supposed to bring atonement. That the prediction relates to a Joseph-type was discerned by a Christian interpolator of the Testaments: for after the words "prophecy of Heaven" he inserted the words, "concerning the Lamb of God and Savior of the world," so relating the prediction to Jesus.*

**Answer for yourself:** Having done this study and having now come to understand the "Exodus Allegory" and how the archetype of Joshua was used to frame the Essene's Teacher of Righteousness and also understanding the Hebrew word usage of "Joshua" and the Latin "Jesus" then can you now see clearly how the Christian interpolator, in spite of his possible sectarian intentions, may have discerned the archetypal connection between Joseph, and the Teacher of Righteousness, and Jesus, with a clarity that we ourselves might be well advised to emulate?

## MORE ON ASAPH

The connection with Asaph is even more intriguing. In the Essene work the *Assumption of Moses* referred to earlier, there appears a meaningless name, *Taxo*, applied to a saintly Levite who, with his seven sons, retires from the corrupt city of Jerusalem and sets up residence in a cave. Credit is due to Schonfield for having applied an old cipher of Hebrew scripture and thus discovering that *Taxo* is a coded disguise for *Asaph*. The cipher is one in which the first eleven of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are exchanged for the last eleven letters in reverse order. The key to the cipher is Aleph equals Tav and Beth equals Shin, which is



pronounced *Atbash*.)

**Answer for yourself:** The question now arises: Who is Asaph?

Asaph ben Berechiah is described in several books of the Bible as a Levite at the time of King Solomon. In both Jewish and Islamic lore he is regarded as a master of occult and miraculous arts, a wizardly figure who advises King Solomon in the theurgic practices, a man possessing knowledge of the true and ineffable Name of God. These qualities combined with the notion that, according to a later version, he is said to flee to live in a cave were sufficient to **establish him in the eyes of the Essenes as a forerunner of their Teacher.**

Joshua is the heroic hierophant of the concealed Law; Joseph, the gentle patriarch, betrayed and tormented by his brothers; Asaph, the priestly thaumaturge who works miracles and knows the secrets of the Divine Name. **All three lead us to the True Teacher or Teacher of Righteousness. Perhaps it is well that he has no name, for in a mystical sense he is Joshua, as well as Joseph and Asaph, a bringer of the new Torah, a suffering and murdered image of meekness, and a magical healer and worker of mighty deeds of the spirit. And further down the road of history there is Jesus, embodying all of these archetypal qualities, and synchronistically related to the names of all three of his spiritual forerunners. His name is that of Joshua, his father is Joseph, and-incredibly enough- one of his latest legendary manifestations as told by Islamic and Asian sources is none other than a mystery figure called Jo-Asaph. The latter point needs to be explained briefly.**

Ancient Islamic records tell of a saintly religious teacher named Jo-Asaph or Yaz-Asaf. An influential Moslem sect known as the Ahmadiyya movement flatly **states that this Jo-Asaph is identical with Jesus, who survived his crucifixion and ended his days in India.** Related to this mythical development may be the once very popular medieval work *Barlaam and Josaphat* (known in its variant form as *Barlaam and Jo-Asaph*), which has been alternatively suspected to be a disguised story of Jesus and of Buddha.

**All of the above considerations make it fairly clear that the figure of the Christian Savior is the last and greatest of a series of archetypal images manifesting in Jewish tradition, which finally converged in the universal Messiahship of the new dispensation.** Joshua the conquering lawgiver, embodied in his namesake, became both the suffering Joseph and the miracle working Asaph, even as he came to be regarded in emulation of the priestly and royal messiahs of the Essenes as the sacrificed priest and the Davidic World Ruler.

**It is but one step from these convergencies to the undisguised intrapsychic mysticism expressed in the cosmic Messiahship of the Gnostic Christians who gave us the First New Testament. The sequence from Joshua to Joseph to Asaph to Jesus logically leads to the Gnostic Christ, the celestial *anthropos* or heavenly man.** Schonfield makes this quite plain when speaking of the connection of Jesus with the messianic prefiguration in the patriarch Joseph:

*Using the account in the Bible of the favorite son of Jacob- whose death had been sought by his brothers and who had been exiled from his land as a Messianic antetype, the Essenes saw in him the anticipation of their True Teacher. From this equation, and the doctrine of the two Messiahs, there emerged the figure of a "Son of Joseph" Messiah.... He would be the Man performing the perfect will of God and suffering accordingly.*

Higher flights of esotericism then **linked the Man human with the Man celestial, the primeval Son of Man, in whose universe-filling likeness the first man on earth, Adam, was created.**

Following upon the earlier *prototypes* (early images) or "*antezypes*" as Schonfield calls them, came the epiphany of the *archetype* (primeval image) as perceived and proclaimed by the Gnostics. **The Essenes had envisioned it with remarkable insight, but due to their secretive esotericism they could or would not proclaim their vision openly. Veiled in allegory and concealed by code and cipher, they guarded the Messiah**

**archetype in their secret Torah. In his highly authoritative early work, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Allegro went on record stating:**

*An intriguing problem which has presented itself during the work has been the deciphering of a number of different secret codes in which several of the works were written to keep certain works especially secret.*

**By contrast, the Gnostic Christ and other mythic and semi-mythic savior figures were no longer concealed.** The religious pluralism of the great metropolitan centers of the Roman Empire, where the Gnostics flourished, did away with the anxious secretiveness practiced by the People of the Scrolls. **Only centuries later when pluralism ceased and the repression of a newly emerged orthodoxy struck did the Gnostics resort to secrecy again. Until then the Gnostic Messianic image was open to the gaze of all. The Semitic obsession with concealment vanished along with the preoccupation with purity, diet, and other remnants of the old law. A new era, a new law, a new dispensation of Gnosis had come.** Still, the new was no more than a more highly differentiated offspring of the old, and an explicit as well as implicit continuity existed between them. Allegro justly stated this:

*The gnostic ("knowing") Essenes reappear on the literary scene as "gnostic Christians," but . . . there is really no justification for the heavy black dividing line that is customarily drawn across the page of history between them. There is a continuous development of religious thought, influenced by the turn of political events, which is perfectly comprehensible chronologically and doctrinally without the artificial separation of "Christian" from "pre-Christian"*

**When contemplating the movement of the esoteric Jewish prototypes and their culmination in the new messianic archetype of the Gnostic Christ, it is necessary to remember that this development was greatly facilitated by a powerful intellectual-spiritual development that did not have its seat in Palestine but in Alexandria, Egypt. It is this same city mind you that we find the Essenes's corruption of the Hebrew Scriptures whereby they wrote in among the texts their religious belief system in the Cosmic Godman which replaced the human Jewish Messiah and became the foundation for all later Greek, Latin, and English Old Testaments.** The great city of Alexander, located at the crossroads of many cultures and traditions, harbored a distinguished movement directed toward the synthesis of the deepest and most enlightened elements of the religious traditions of the Jews and the so-called Pagan peoples of antiquity. As early as 250 years before the birth of Jesus, the wise men of Alexandria were busily at work in their attempt to discern the underlying unity within the structures of Semitic and Greco-Egyptian spirituality. Ever since the learned ruler Ptolemy Philadeiphus (325-246 B.C.) commissioned a team of scholars to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, this Helleno-Jewish spiritual conjunction may be said to have gathered momentum in its development. **It was the greatest representative of this movement, Philo of Alexandria (who, as stated, was well acquainted with the Essenes), who became the first thinker to employ the term "archetype" in a sense closely resembling its usage in modern depth psychology. Philo clearly recognized-as did subsequently the Gnostics- that the gulf separating the monotheistic God from the human soul may be bridged by intermediate spiritual beings as well as by exalted and indeed divinized personages such as some of the greatest figures of the Bible. Intimately connected with Philo's teachings regarding such beings was his concept of archetypes, which was manifest among others in his teaching regarding the Logos of God. This principle, said Philo, was in effect the archetypal manifestation of God in relation to humanity. The Logos was the interpreting, prophetic, priestly effulgence of God uniquely capable of bringing humans to the knowledge of God. Not only was this concept obviously utilized by Christian theology subsequently, but it also reminds us powerfully of the principle underlying the thinking of the Essenes, particularly concerning their archetypal spiritual figures such as Joshua, Joseph, Asaph, and the Teacher of Righteousness as well as Jesus!**



## CONCLUSION

It is somewhat difficult for us today to appreciate the import of the archetypal element in connection with such figures of religious lore as Joshua, Joseph, Asaph, the Teacher of Righteousness, and Jesus. An insightful Jungian writer, Lucindi F. Mooney, wrote concerning this:

*Archetypal symbols, primordial images, actually do have the same meanings as always. What has changed in the Christian world is the Westerner's religious attitude toward them. For example, the form or physical representation of the symbol, created by our earlier fathers in an effort to express externally an internal drama, is almost universally rejected as a mere piece of carving or plaster. Nothing else. Once such symbols are seriously questioned as being indicators for something beyond rationality, they die. Thus, our culture is one commonly referred to as stripped of its symbols, as floundering between two myths, as rejecting its own hereditary home.*



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# THE ANCIENT MEANING OF THE LOGOS...LOST TO ALMOST ALL MANKIND TODAY

Let us do a little refreshing of prior concepts before we get to an in-depth study of the Logos which finds its origin in Egypt long before Gentile Christianity redefines the term.

The cosmological ideas of ancient Egypt were expressed by myth and symbolism, which are a superior means for expressing metaphysical concepts. Philosophy, mathematics and science are dry subjects with many abstracts. Mythology incorporates philosophical and scientific ideas into a story form, like a sacred drama or mystery play, which can be easily digested. Pure philosophical and scientific abstracts and terms do not guarantee understanding. Information alone is useless, unless it is transformed into understanding. Well-crafted mythology can achieve that understanding.

The Egyptian creation myths, regarding the universe, are similar to the account provided in the opening chapter of Genesis: God creates heaven and earth, divides the waters, creates the light, and gives life to animals and man. Once you see how the Jewish people find their origin within Egypt then you will understand why Genesis is a mirror image of what the Egyptians taught about the creation!

The origin of the world and the nature of the neteru [not gods remember?; but energies and forces or we can call them Spirit/God] who took part in its creation were subjects of constant interest to the Egyptians. Now what I will say next is very important so pay close attention to these 4 centers of Theological Diversity for they will be of major importance as we later see their role in shaping the events that produced the Exodus. The Egyptian cosmology was divided into four separate but complementary teachings, each with its center of interest. The four Egyptian separate teachings at the four centers were sponsored by four different neteru:

- The main neteru of creation are Ra of Onnu (Heliopolis),
- Ptah of Men-Nefer (Memphis),
- Amen of Ta-Apet (Thebes).
- The fourth, namely Tehuti (Thoth) of Khmunu (Hermopolis), provided an account of creation as a result of the word-analogous to the opening of the Gospel according to St. John.

*Notice if you would that one of the "creative forces" that finds itself within God is "the Word;" better known later by the Greek term "Logos."*

I want to draw your attention to the fact that the Egyptians understood creation to be act of various forces and powers: Ra, Ptah, Amen, and Thoth. Each of these energies and powers and forces were personified as Ra, Ptah, Amen, and Thoth. These together made up God. Each of these powers, energies, and forces had its own major city which taught of their own role and ascribed to each its own theology. The city of Heliopolis was concerned with Ra and his manifestations in the Universe, the city of Memphis was concerned with Ptah and his role in the Universe, the city of Thebes with Amen and likewise Hermopolis with Thoth (the Word). The Divine Revelation possessed by Egypt was expressed through their



writings concerning these various aspects of God and His role in the Cosmos through these energies and forces which not only began creation but sustained it daily.

## THE ANCIENT MEANING OF LOGOS

*"When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it." [Prologue to the Gospel of John: 1-5]*

If you are a Christian you are most familiar with the above passage but I assure you that you don't as of yet understand the concept correctly because Gentile Christianity has changed and altered the meaning of the concept almost beyond recognition and no longer understands the term "Logos" as nothing more than a personification of a force or power that finds itself with God. If you are like most Christians you have been told that Jesus is the Logos is a literal way and attached to this is the idea of incarnation. You will find upon examination of the term in the language and culture in which it originates it NEVER was to be understood in a "LITERAL" way as has been done and taught by Gentile Christianity. Let us investigate this term thoroughly to find the truth about the "Logos" which is lost to almost all mankind today; that is unless they study hard to find it.

## RECOVERING TRUTH LONG OVERLOOKED

It is the "Word" that we most often hear in terms of describing the Logos. But there is much more.

Referring to the Logos merely in terms of the concept of "Word" is considered inadequate by serious scholars. The best way to get a grip on the Logos is by exploring how it was used in Egyptian religion, in Greek philosophy, in the Old Testament (where it is the Sophia), and in Early Christianity and compare the meanings for consistency and deviation of the original meaning of the term.

Taking account the Egyptian hermetic writings, "probably the earliest antecedent to the idea of the Logos came from...Heraclitus." His conceptual universe was one that constantly changed, a universe in constant motion propelled by all-pervading Reason, which Heraclitus likened to divine fire or energy.

Following Heraclitus, the philosopher Anaxagoras considered a "Divine Mind", which was immanent in the created order... [John A. Sanford, Mystical Christianity: A Psychological Commentary On The Gospel of John, Crossroad, 1995, p. 19]

Sanford mentions Plato's idea of a "spiritual reality that gave to the created world its form and being." This was the imaginal realm of Platonic Forms, an archetypal realm of changeless and universal patterns of which "the material world is but an imperfect representation." For Sanford, the Logos "partakes of the of the nature of this archetypal reality." [Ibid, p. 19]

Aristotle believed that matter and form always existed together. Hence, for him, human beings had not only a material body, but also a soul in which there dwells a divine spark that the soul shares with God. "This spark of divinity in human nature is an element of the divine Logos--the shaping spiritual power and essence of God--is eternal and impersonal." [Ibid, p. 20].

*I hope you noticed that the "Logos" is to be found in ALL mankind and not just one person.*

Sanford stresses that the concept of the Logos was most fully expressed by the Stoic philosophers. Stoicism believed the Universe to consist of two kinds of matter: a gross or coarse matter; and an

extremely fine matter, which is virtually indistinguishable from the idea of spirit. The material, created order is thus pervaded with the spiritual substance, but it is also pervaded with a vital element--like the energetic fire of Heraclitus--that shaped, harmonized, and interpenetrated all things. For the Stoics, this was nothing less than an intelligent, self-conscious world-soul, an indwelling Logos within mankind.

Considering the Logos as God, and as the source of all life and all wisdom--then our 'human reason partakes of its nature, because this Logos dwells within us. For this reason we can follow the God within and refer to ourselves as the offspring of God.' [Ibid, p.20]

Fideler packages these ancient concepts of the Logos as follows: "Logos designates the power of 'reason;' the pattern or order of things; the principle of relationship; and an articulation of something."

In general, the Logos has the following meanings:

- Order or pattern.
- Ratio or proportion.
- A discourse, articulation or account, even a 'sermon.'
- Reason, both in the sense of rationality and in the sense of an articulation of the cause of something.
- Principle or cause (logoi=principles, ratios, reasons).
- A principle of mediation and harmony between extremes

[David Fideler, Jesus Christ...Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology And Early Christian Symbolism, Quest Books, 1993, p. 38]

Further discussing the meaning of the Logos, Sanford also stresses the "equally important influence of the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we find an idea of God's creative spirit immanent within the creation and residing even in the human soul that is as old--or perhaps older--as that of the Greeks." [Mystical Christianity, p. 21]. My studies reveal that last statement to be true; the "Logos" teaching predated Greece and even the Jews as it can be found as far back as the earliest recorded literature among mankind in Egypt.

In parts of the Old Testament it is the \*Sophia\* that embodies and symbolizes the feminine aspect of God. The Sophia shared in the generative power which created the world. The Sophia "dwelt immanent within the world, and which also dwelt within the human heart..." The Sophia was considered the fount of all human knowledge, whether physical, psychological or spiritual--"knowledge, which she can likewise impart because she is mistress of the soul." [Ibid, p. 22]

The philosophers of the early Church saw Christ as the embodiment of the Sophia as well as the Incarnation of the Logos. Now we get to the very crux of this problem that confronts Christianity today. The term "Christ" means "anointing" and is not a person's name; it is better understood as a part of God within every man and is displayed by some better than others due to their obedience to the Laws and Reason of the Universe. This term and concept was applied to Jesus/Yeshua by his followers in a symbolic way because Yeshua lived before them the "Divine" life better than any and lived the Laws of God in such a way that he reflected best the Divine that is within each man. Jesus was by his followers NEVER thought to be the LITERAL "Logos" in a body form until much later under Gentile influences. You might say that Jesus/Yeshua exhibited in his life and teachings the Divine Harmony of Heaven on earth through his obedience to the Laws of his Father God (the First Cause). Order, another definition of the "Logos," was manifested best in Yeshua's life as he exhibited Heaven on Earth through his actions and message and even taught his followers to imitate him in this way by yielding to the Divine Reason within them and through obedience to the Commandments of God which bring order to this world whereby they could manifest Heaven on earth:



***Matt 6:10 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (KJV)***

For these early Christian thinkers...it was clear that to say "Christ was the Word" was to assign to Christ a profoundly mystical and far-reaching reality. It meant that the utterly transcendent God...created the world through that self-expression termed the Logos, and that this Logos, or Creative Word of God, is immanent within all of the creation." [Ibid, p. 23]

These early Christian philosophers also believed in Christ's pre-existence [notice again we are not speaking of the human Jesus]. Christ as the Logos or Wisdom of God had to exist from the beginning before incarnation, in a symbolic sense, could take place.

Sanford sums it up beautifully: ***"The world-creating Logos [order] could be seen in the movements of the heavenly bodies, in the majesty of the skies, in the great ocean with its abundance of life, but also could be seen in the tiniest unit of life...But the most important place where the Word of God was to be found for the early Christians was within the soul herself, where it lived as an "imago dei," like a spring of water from which flowed the knowledge of God."*** [Ibid, p. 23]. The term "imago dei" means the imitation of the God of the Universe. This order expressed by these Divine forces and powers was communicated by the "Logos" to mankind thought Physical and Spiritual Laws. Our interest is upon the Spiritual Laws best understood as the Law or the Torah. Properly understood the Laws of God in the Torah are the highest expressions of "order" and "reason" that mankind can know. They are the highest expressions of true love in the Universe. They consist of 365 Commandments of which 248 are "positive" and 365 are "negative." When one comes to understand and conducts his life according to these Laws and understands them as Divine Revelation of Whom this God "is and does..the positive Commandments" and Whom this God "is not and does not-the negative Commandments" and then patterns his life after them then he exhibits the "Logos" to the fullest degree as did Yeshua/Jesus. Thus Jesus, living before others these Laws to their fullest, was seen and understood to be the fullest representation of the Divine in human form; therefore others believed him to be the "Christ" or "Logos" in human flesh. History records for us many "Christs" but among Israel few if any had yielded so perfectly to the Will of God as had Yeshua.

***I Jn 2:27 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (KJV)***

As you can see mankind is the repository of this "Logos" and it is up to each of us to yield to this order of Heaven in our lives and some do it better than others and history records such great men or "avatars." Therefore Yeshua/Jesus became a vessel of honor whereby the fullness of the Godhead (neteru) could tabernacle within him to a greater degree than it had in others that came before him.

We now come to another problem brought into being by the failure of the Gentiles to understand properly the concepts enumerated above. The "Christ" that indwell every man and the "anointing" that dwell within every man as the "Logos" was "without measure in Yeshua as taught by the writer of the Gospel of John.

***John 3:34 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. (KJV)***

The question arises as to "when" Yeshua received this "Logos" or "anointing." Historically the Jews who knew Yeshua record for us that the "anointing" manifested itself at one' baptism. That might sound simple until you understand "baptism" from a Jewish perspective for it is not unusual for a Jewish male to be baptized or "mikvehed" before each Festival, meeting in the Temple for the Sabbath, after repentance, etc., and even more for a women following her menses. It is in this sense that one is **"born from above"** over and over and the recorded instance for us in the Gospels records Yeshua being anointed at this particular mikveh before Yom Kippur. **No Jewish male could be in right standing with God and participate in one of the Seven Festivals of YHWH unless "born again" or "mikvehed" before observance of the Festival.** In the

**traditional sense Yeshua received the "anointing without measure" at this instance in his life. Contrary views later surfaced by the Gentile Church where older pagan myths of sun worshiping nations were removed from their "allegorical" meanings and applied LITERALLY to Jesus and the incarnation of the "Logos/anointing" was now taught as if existing before the beginning of time. We have seen however in the earlier article and articles that this incarnation was always to be understood in a metaphorical and allegorical sense and NEVER in a LITERAL sense as applied by the Gentile Church as the myths of pagan sun gods and sun godmen was LITERALLY applied to Jesus as if he were one and the same. He was not.**





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## THE ROMAN PURGE OF TRUTH AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

"One day in AD 391, the Roman-appointed Bishop Theophilus marched from his headquarters in the Brucheion Royal quarter of Alexandria, at the head of a large howling mob, heading west for the Serapeum in the heart of the Egyptian quarter of Rhakotis. The Serapeum, which had been the centre of Egyptian worship for seven centuries, was adorned with extensive columned halls, almost breathing statues, and a great number of other works of art, as well as being the house of the Great Alexandrian library. The frenzied people rushed through the streets along the Canopic way, turning into the short street that led to the temple-area of Serapis, meeting other crowds there, before climbing up the great flight of marble steps, led by Bishop Theophilus. They jumped across the stone platform and into the temple, where the events of the final tragedy took place."

"In their agitated mood, the angry mob took little heed of the gold and silver ornaments, the precious jewels, the priceless bronze and marble statues, the rare murals and tapestries, the carved and painted pillars of granite and many marbles, the ebony and scented woods, the ivory and exotic furniture - all were smashed to pieces with cries of pleasure. But that was not all. Those shouting men, full of demoniac delight, then turned to the library, where hundreds of thousands of papyrus rolls and parchments, inscribed with ancient wisdom and knowledge, were taken off their shelves, torn to pieces and thrown on to bonfires. A few years later the last of the Alexandrian scholars was torn to pieces by a gang of Christian monks. On a Lenten day in March of the year AD 415 they stopped the carriage of Hypatia, who had succeeded her father as Professor of Philosophy in Alexandria, stripped her naked, dragged her into a nearby church, killed her, cut most of her flesh from her body with sharp oyster shells, and burned what remained of her in the street. The charge against Hypatia, who had taught the philosophy of Plato, was heresy."

"As a result of this barbaric killing of Alexandrian scholars and destruction of its library, which contained texts in Greek of all aspects of ancient wisdom and knowledge, the true Egyptian roots of Christianity and of Western civilization have been obscured for nearly 16 centuries." (Ahmed Osman, Out of Egypt, The Roots Of Christianity Revealed, Aarow Books Limited, 1999, prologue).

The above description tells only part of the story; how antisemitic Gentile Christianity altered the earliest Divine Revelations of God on this planet and through "personification" and later "literalization of this Divine Revelation" constructed an entirely new religion that has obscured and altered what the ancients knew best about God and Creation. Simply said the end result is that 2.5 billion people today who are named by the name "Christian" live and worship in idolatry never knowing until they die the tragic consequences of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library by Rome which was undertaken to cover-up their plagiarism, alteration, mutation, and adulteration of the world's oldest Revelation of God given to mankind. The aim of Bet Emet Ministries is to rediscover these roots, with the help of new

historical and archaeological evidence and we have done just that in the various websites provided by this ministry.

With the loss of this knowledge collected by the world since the earliest of time mankind was swept into the Dark Ages by the Roman Church.

- **Lost is the understanding that Egyptian thought was presented in allegory and in term of mythology: myth was used to convey insights into the workings of the Divine and Nature and the ultimately indescribable realities of the soul**
- **Covered up for centuries is the fact that many of the stories of both the Old and the New Testaments are firmly established on models of Ancient Egyptian historical facts.**
- **Many essential religious doctrines that Judaism and Christianity are credited with, in fact came out of Egypt.**
- **Covered up throughout history was the fact that all the central characters of both the Old Testament and the New Testament were actually real historical Egyptian figures, who lived in a different period than we have believed up till now.**
- 

All of this knowledge was lost when the Alexandria library was razed to the ground by Rome.

Western scholars, whether Christian, Jewish or Atheist, tend to ignore Egyptian views when interpreting the accounts of ancient history. Even Manetho, the great Egyptian scholar responsible for the arrangement of the Alexandrian library, has been dismissed as unqualified to write about scientific matters to the Greeks. Commenting on an account that Manetho wrote in Epitome of Physical Doctrines, W. G. Waddell wrote:

*That an Egyptian priest should seek to instruct the Greek-speaking world of his time in the history of Egypt and the religious beliefs of the Egyptians. . . is not at all surprising, hut it seems strange that Manetho should feel called upon, in the third century BC, to compose an Epitome of Physical Doctrines with the apparent object of familiarizing the Greeks with Egyptian science [Manetho, London, 1940, p. xxvii]*

In addition, Islamic documents are completely disregarded as a source of ancient tradition, when arguing the history of biblical stories. This cannot be justified, for the stories in the Koran come from the same source as the books of the Bible. Moreover, the Koran accounts agree with those of the Bible in the majority of cases, which makes it more important to examine the reason for various points, of divergence.

The time has come for Egypt's voice to be heard again. **If Egypt's voice is heard then Christian theology will be shown to be a fraud and a terrible misrepresentation of the earliest Divine Revelation of God given to mankind which treasured.**

Until the destruction of its library in AD 391, Alexandria had remained the most important cultural centre of the ancient world, and the focal point of the mutual influence exercised in the conjunction of Christianity and Hellenism, in spite of four centuries of Rome's political supremacy. Founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC, it was the first real cosmopolitan city in history, where Macedomans and Greeks lived together with Egyptians and Jews, and scholars flocked from all over the world to do their research. The Essenes would be the dominant force behind this Library and had in this city their own theological university as well. Scholars came from Italy and Greece, from Anatolia and the Levant, from north Africa, Arabia, and even from Persia and India. Not only did they share a common habitation in Alexandria, they all had the same longing for knowledge and the same interest in philosophy and ancient wisdom, as represented in the teaching of Hermes Trismegistus and the worship of Serapis. Thoth, ancient Egyptian god of writing, became identified with the Greek god Hermes. Hermes Trismegistus means 'Hermes the Thrice-greatest'.

**As stated before with my comment about the Essenes this city was also the center of Hellenistic Judaism. It was in Alexandria that Philo Judaeus, the first Jewish philosopher, wrote his 38 books in the 1st century AD. The city had, in addition, the only library containing almost all the books of**



**ancient civilizations, including the Greek text of the Old Testament. Hence it is not astonishing that Alexandria rapidly became the main Christian intellectual centre.**

The rich collection of ancient written knowledge in the Serapeum proved irresistible for Diodorus Siculus, a Sicilian scholar, when he set out in the first century BC, in the time of Julius Caesar, to research his ambitious Bibliotheca Historica - the "bookshelf of history". The historian Ammanius Marcellinus (c. AD 330-391), who himself visited Alexandria, wrote about this temple: "... the Serapeum, which, although no description can do it justice, yet is so adorned with extensive columned halls, with almost breathing statues, and a great number of other works of art, that next to the Capitolium, with which revered Rome elevates herself to eternity, the whole world beholds nothing more magnificent. In this were invaluable libraries . . ." (22: 16, 12-13). Diodorus, who was an enthusiast of the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus (which have survived until today in the teachings of Islamic Sufis, Jewish Qabbalah and Christian Rosicrucians and Freemasons), became convinced of Egypt's importance as a source of knowledge. The Greek and Roman gods, he believed, had been born there, life had originated there, and there the first observations of the stars had been made. **Astro-theology was the earliest revelation of God that mankind received. This might sound wrong but not so when such observations of the Heavens and Nature spoke the clearest message about God and His message to mankind. Only later when these observations were personified and then later "literalized" does mankind lose Divine truth. This is explained in great detail on our Essene website and the Essenes are primarily responsible for the loss of such Divine Truth.** The last famous scholar associated with the Serapeum before its destruction was Theon, a celebrated mathematician whose recension of Euclid's Element was the only text of this work until the last century, and whose daughter Hypatia was to meet a terrible death at the hands of Theophilus's nephew Bishop Cyril.

**Up to the end of the fourth century AD, the time when the Alexandrian library was destroyed, Egypt was regarded as the holy land of the ancient world, the source of wisdom and knowledge where God became known for the first time.** Pilgrims then, including Roman emperors, came from all over the world to worship in the temples of Isis and Serapis, as well as at the foot of Mount Sinai.

**This situation came to an end, however, in the latter years of the reign of the emperor Theodosius I, who was zealous in his suppression of both paganism - the belief in the many gods of pre-Christianity - and heresy - any opinion contrary to orthodox Roman religious doctrine.** Emperor of the East (AD 379-392), and then sole emperor of East and West (AD 392-395), he enforced the Creed of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) as a universal norm for Christian orthodoxy and directed the convening of the second general council at Constantinople in AD 381 to clarify the formula.

**"It is our wish and pleasure that none of our subjects, whether magistrates or private citizens, however exalted or however humble may be their rank or condition, shall presume in any city or in any place to worship an inanimate idol"** declared Theodosius in his last edict. Fanatical mobs of the Church then roamed the lands, razing old temples to the ground and plundering their wealth. Ancient tombs were desecrated, walls of monuments scraped clean of names and depictions of deities, statues toppled over and smashed. In Alexandria, Bishop Theophilus was as ambitious as the emperor, Theodosius I, who had appointed him. **It was one of his zealous actions that led to the burning of an estimated half a million books stored in the Alexandrian library, described above.**

Theophilus of Alexandria (AD 385-412) was one of the orthodox leaders who represented the imperial government dispatched from Rome to impose official orthodoxy on the Alexandrian Church. He led a campaign against paganism and heresy in Egypt that included destruction of the Serapeum (the temple of Serapis - originally an ancient Egyptian god of the underworld, subsequently reintroduced as the official deity for Alexandria and Egypt by Ptolemy I [305-284 BC]) where the Alexandrian library was placed. The Serapeum, at the same time as being the centre of worship for the ancient Egyptian trinity of Osiris, Isis and Horns, became a focal point for the emerging Christian Gnostic sects - those Christians who sought to gain spiritual knowledge through mysteries and the attempt to know oneself, interpreting the Scriptures allegorically.



The first Christian emperor, Constantine I (AD 324-337), had made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. He also granted political power to the Church. Bishops were not only recognized as councillors of state but obtained juridical rights: their solutions to civil suits were legally enforced. The bishops used their newly acquired power to spread the word of God and stamp out His enemies, who in this case were not only the pagans but the heretics - and Rome regarded Egyptian Christians as heretics. According to tradition, the Church of Alexandria was founded neither by St Peter nor by St Paul but by St Mark the Evangelist, even before what is said to have been the first Apostolic Council of Jerusalem in c. AD 50 (mentioned in the Book of Acts, 15:28). **The first theological school to be established in the world also flourished in Alexandria before the end of the 2nd century AD, and became an influential centre of Christian scholarship.** Among its directors were the famous Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Christian monasticism as an institution was initiated principally in Egypt by St Antony the Copt (c. AD 251-356), who fled to the solitude of the western desert from his native village of Coma, not far from Tell al-Amama, in Middle Egypt. Others followed his example and a monastic colony arose around his cave in the Red Sea mountains.

**Although Alexandria made an important contribution in developing the first systematic Christian theology, the Alexandrian theologists were strongly influenced by the Neo-Platonists' philosophy. Neo-Platonists were Alexandrian philosophers who followed the same philosophy as the Athenian Plato; Plotinus of the 3rd century AD is the most celebrated. Biblical exegesis at Alexandria was allegorical and mystical, following the same method as Philo Judaeus, who tried to harmonize philosophy and the Bible. From the start, Alexandrian exegesis did not attach to the literal sense of the Bible. Their primary interest was concentrated on the mystery of divine revelation revealed in the historical and literary details of the Old Testament. It was therefore a question of discovering Christ in the older revelation.**

The Alexandrian authors sought out in the Old Testament symbols of the New. For early Egyptian Christians, accepting one God was an evolutionary process in which the old system was assimilated into the new, and old deities became angelic beings and mediators between man and the unseen Lord. Idols, for them, did not represent the deities themselves, but were merely a physical form in which the spiritual beings could dwell during prayer. **The Gnostic teachers found their followers at Alexandria, and much of the ecclesiastical history of this city was concerned with the heresies that appeared there.**

The Serapeum, originally established by the Ptolemies (the Macedonian kings who ruled Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great), later became also a centre for Gnostic communities, both Hermetic (i.e. adhering to the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus) and Christian. Some Gnostic Christian sects grew from within the cult of Serapis, who made no distinction between Christ and Serapis - this, too, will be explained as this book unfolds. **The general library at the Serapeum gradually became a focal point for scholars and intellectuals, from all over the Roman Empire, whose views contradicted the teachings of the Church. For this reason it became regarded as heretical and had to be destroyed.**

**With the destruction of the Serapeum, not only Egyptian knowledge was lost; Mesopotamian, Syrian, Phoenician, Jewish and Greek learning also vanished. The whole scientific achievement of the old civilizations, regarded as heresy by Bishop Theophilus, disappeared in a single day - books on astronomy, anatomy, medicine, geometry, geography, history, philosophy, theology and literature, as well as copies of the early Gnostic gospels of Christ. The result was the beginning of the dark ages, which lasted for more than ten centuries after that. All branches of science, as well as heretical writings which did not adhere to the teaching of the orthodox Church, were forbidden by the state. This left the canonic books of the Scripture as the main source of Western knowledge until the Renaissance in the 15th century.**

While the discovery of some remaining copies of old forbidden manuscripts, especially the Hermetic and NeoPlatonic philosophies, produced the age of the Western renaissance from the 15th century in art, science and technology, history had to wait for modern archaeologists to dig out old remains and inscribed papyrus rolls before we could regain our memory. In his book Archives In The Ancient World, Ernst Posner, the



American historian, has said of the achievements of archaeologists during this period that they are "momentous - comparable in a way to the discovery of America. . . a new dimension of almost two millennia has been added to the history of mankind as it was known in 1850..." "Now we can view with profound respect the cultural achievements of the countries surrounding the eastern Mediterranean, and we can begin to assess their interrelations with, and their possible influence on, the cultures of Greece and Rome."

Egypt was the birthplace of our spiritual teachers - from Imhotep, the first pyramid builder of the 27th century BC, to Moses and Akhenaten, who first recognized one God, to the followers of Osiris (Egyptian god of the underworld and judge of the dead), Hermes Trismegistus and of Jesus Christ who looked for spiritual salvation and eternal life. Thanks to modern archaeologists, a new age now appears on the horizon, with Egypt restored to its original place.

It looks like a fulfillment of an old prophecy which predicted that woes will come upon Egypt, but also promised that order would finally be restored again. This prophecy is found in the Hermetic text of Asclepius, discovered among the Nag Hammadi library. Asclepius is a dialogue between the mystagogue Hermes Trismegistus and an initiate, Asclepius. In an apocalyptic section with significant Egyptian and Israelite parallels, the speaker predicts the fall, then rise again, of Egypt:

*are you ignorant, O Asclepius, that Egypt is (the) image of heaven? Moreover, it is the dwelling place of heaven and all the forces that are in heaven. If it is proper for us to speak the truth, our land is (the) temple of the world. And it is proper for you not to be ignorant that a time will come in it (our land) (when) Egyptians will seem to have served the divinity in vain, and all their activity in their religion will be despised. For all divinity will leave Egypt and will flee upward to heaven. And Egypt will be widowed; it will be abandoned by the gods. For foreigners will come into Egypt, and they will rule it. . . And in that day the country that was more pious than all countries will become impious. No longer will it be full of temples, but it will be full of tombs. .. Egypt, lover of God, and the dwelling place of the gods, school of religion, will become an example of impiety . . . [Then Egypt will be restored again] And the lords of the earth... will establish themselves in a city that is in a corner of Egypt that will be built toward the setting of the sun.*

Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet of the 6th century BC, confirms this prophecy and foretells the appearance of a saviour in Egypt:

*The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour. . . And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof. . . In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt. . . and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. [Isaiah 19:1-3; 19-20]*

Helmut Koester, Professor of the History of Ancient Christianity at Harvard University, who was responsible for translating the Nag Hammadi Gospel of Thomas (which includes many previously unknown sayings of Christ) into English, spoke about the need for "a thorough and extensive reevaluation of early Christian history". He went on to say: *"The task is not limited to fresh reading of the known sources and a close scrutiny of the new texts in order to redefine their appropriate place within the conventional picture of the early Christian history. Rather it is the conventional picture itself that is called into question."*

## CONCLUSION



The Library of Alexandria, in reality two or more libraries in the ancient Egyptian capitol, has achieved an almost mythic stature in the study of classics from the time of the Renaissance. The apocryphal burning of the Library during Julius Caesar's occupation of the city has been described as the greatest calamity of the ancient world, wherein the most complete collection of all Greek and Near Eastern literature was lost in one great conflagration. In reality, the Library and its community of scholars not only flourished during the Hellenistic era of the Ptolemies, but continued to survive through the Roman Empire and the incessant turbulence of the Empire's most volatile and valuable city. For valuable indeed was the granary of the empire, which was also a prosperous trade center between east and west, linked to the Mediterranean and, not far to the east, to the Red Sea and Indian traderoutes via a canal. This cosmopolitan city drew Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, and Jews into a unique and not entirely harmonious coexistence. The Alexandrian Museum and Library, then, was an ideal place for scholars from these different cultures to meet and exchange learning, and was a repository for the literature and accounts of the Alexandrian intelligensia and the Roman Empire in general. However, while sources agree on the Museum's uniqueness and value, no surviving account of its activities actually exists, and modern scholarship has largely ignored this poorly-documented portion of history.

I need to say something about the religion of Serapis and Sophia. At this time the old gods of Egypt, meanwhile, had not died out, but merely been woven together with the pantheons of newcomers. Strabo's contemporary, Vitruvius, describes a festival of the Muses in Alexandria, almost certainly based at the Museum, so it seems that the religious aspect of the institution continued to play an important part in Imperial Alexandria. By Roman times, the worship of purely Olympian gods had altered as the population had become a Greek-Egyptian mix, and all the gods were now worshipped as their Egyptian counterparts with Greek attributes. Besides the Egyptian Greeks, the Jews accounted for a significant amount of the population, living in their own quarter, governed by an ethnarch, and originally exempted from many of the taxes; their ethnarch was replaced by a Council of Elders under Augustus. An intriguing dialogue between Pagan, Jewish, and, later, Christian thought developed among the scholars of Alexandria, as religious thought was refined and ideas adapted not only from the other theologies common in Alexandria, but from the Zoroasterism of Iran, and even, through the founder of Neoplatonism, Ammonius Buddhism and Hinduism from India. Thus, Jewish theologian Philo could discuss a mother goddess figure, Sophia, spirit of wisdom, the messenger from Jehovah, whose logos or existence would otherwise be incomprehensible to humanity. We see the same religious concept written in the Book of Proverbs:

*Prov 1:20-21 20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,*  
(KJV)

Understand that this is nothing more than the personification of the wisdom of God expressed in allegory. This is not meant to be LITERAL.

Christian thought was both refined and bizarrely altered during this turbulent era in Alexandria. Introduced by the Alexandrian St. Mark according to tradition, it was initially mistaken by the Emperor Hadrian as a troublesome offshoot of the cult of Serapis. Indeed, the Eucharist, resurrection, and reverence to the Mother were developed in Alexandria during this period, and seem to have echoes in the cult of Serapis, with its Dionsian-style feasting and resurrection, and his consort Isis/Cybele/Demeter. And while the religion had previously been a popular movement of the masses, it was at Alexandria that learned intellectual debate discussed the more philosophical parts of the religion and paved the way for Medieval theological debates. Branches of thought such as Arianism and Gnosticism were to be developed here, and, although later declared heretical, grew side by side with what later became Christian orthodoxy. Gnosticism continues to this day in Egypt; it held that the world was actually a mistake created by the Demiurge, son of the true God and Sophia, who was the Jehovah of the old Testament; God pitied humanity and sent Christ to help humanity reunite with Himself. Some held that Jesus had been a man, and the Christ His spirit after death. The Ophites, an offshoot of the Gnostics with



Cretan influences, carried the religion a step further, worshipping snakes and the divine mother Sophia, who had actually sent the serpent of Eden to warn Eve and Adam that Jehovah was the Demiurge and that they should seek wisdom or knowledge to link with the true God. And, lest these heresies seem too wild, it should be remembered that the first patron saint of Alexandria for the orthodox Christians of the 4th century was St. Anthony, "who thought bathing was sinful and was consequently carried across the canals of the delta by an angel".

After a mere twenty years since the abdication of Diocletian, **Constantine became Emperor and declared Christianity Rome's official religion.** Diocletian's First Edict, as described by Lactantius in his How the Persecutors Died, Chap. 13 Date: February 23/24, 303 A.D., teaches us about the beginning of the "Great Persecution" against Christians which directed that the churches to be leveled, the Scriptures burned, Christians in places of honor to be degraded, and provided the loss of freedom to Christian household servants. It deprived the Christians of all honours and dignities; ordaining also that, without any distinction of rank or degree, they should be subjected to tortures, and that every suit at law should be received against them; while, on the other hand, they were debarred from being plaintiffs in questions of wrong, adultery, or theft; and, finally, that they should neither be capable of freedom, nor have right of suffrage. **By 391, the Emperor Theodosius had reversed Diocletian's edict and commanded all paganism to be stamped out, signalling the end of the Museum and ultimately the Library as well.**

**In 412 Theophilus' nephew Cyril succeeded him as Patriarch of Christianity. The Patriarch exercised control of Alexandria,** and the conflict between secular and religious authority was decided in 415, when the Roman prefect Orestes, officially still in charge of the province, objected to **Cyril's order that all Jews be expelled from Alexandria.** Cyril's army of monks murdered the prefect and were canonized by him for this deed. For, throughout the fourth century the power of the church grew and it was this army of Gnostic monks that became the main tool of the Patriarch of Alexandria and enforced his will. After the edict of Theodosius, the mob was led by the Patriarch Theophilus to demolish the Serapeum. **Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria, persuaded himself that Hypatia's good name and talents were giving the cause of Paganism a dangerous prestige, and thereby preventing the progress of the new faith.** Upon his orders these same monks, while marauding through the city came across Hypatia, daughter of the Museum's last great mathematician Theon. She was a Neoplatonist philosopher and astronomer whose teachings are partially recorded by one of her admirers and pupils, the Christian Synesius, and she was also one of the last members of the Museum.

It is said of her: "Her beauty did astonish the survey of eyes, Her words all ears took captive" (From: "The martyrdom of Hypatia, or, The death of the classical world." A speech given before the Independent Religious Society at the Majestic Theater in Chicago By Mangasar Magurditch Mangasarian). Her renown as a lecturer on philosophy brought students from Rome and Athens, and all the great cities of the empire, to Alexandria. It was one of the great events of each day to flock to the hall in the academy where Hypatia explained Plato and Aristotle."

Driving home from her own lectures without attendant, this independent woman and scholar who epitomized the glory of the knowledge bestowed upon mankind by God was dragged from her chariot by the mob, stripped, flayed, and finally burned alive in the library of the Caesareum as a witch (as denoted above). Cyril, who was behind this terrible deed, was made a saint. **After Hypatia's death Alexandria became steadily less stable and was soon overrun by the monks who evolved into the Copts who incorporated the old Alexandrian prejudices towards foreigners (already expelled the Jews) with the new prejudice towards any scientific or classical knowledge.** The Patriarch Cyril was made a saint for his action behind the destruction of the Library. The library itself was ransacked of any gold or silver and then put to the torch by these monks. Too turbulent even to bow to the Emperor, Alexandria eventually revolted against Constantinople, wound up with two factions contending between two Patriarchs, and eventually fell to Arab conquerors, who had the last of the Library burned as fuel in the bath-houses of the city in 686.

The following is an account of the actual destruction of the Alexandrian Library:



*Theodosius was at the time, of which we will now speak, the Christian ruler of the Empire. In reply to a request by the Archbishop of Alexandria, he sent a sentence of destruction against the ancient religion of Egypt. Both the Pagans and the Christians had assembled in the public square to hear the reading of the Emperor's letter, and when the Christians learned that they may destroy the gods of the Pagans, a wild shout of joy rent the air. The disappointed Pagans, on the other hand, realizing the danger of their position, silently slipped into their homes through dark alleys and hidden passages. Yet they did not stand aside and see the temples of their gods razed to the ground without first offering a desperate resistance. Under the leadership of a zealot, Olympus, the Pagans fell upon the Christians, maddened with the cry in their ears of their leader, "Let us die with our gods!" Then came the turn of the Christians. Theophilius, the Archbishop of Alexandria, with a cross in his hand, and followed by his monks, marched upon the temple of Serapis, and proceeded to pull its pillars down. When they came to strike at the colossal statue of the god, for centuries worshiped as a deity, even the Christians turned pale with superstitious awe, and held their breath. A soldier armed with a heavy axe, was hesitating to strike the first blow. Will the god tolerate the insult? Will he not crash the roof upon the heads of the sacrilegious vandals? But the soldier struck the thundering blow right in the cheeks of Serapis, who offered no remonstrance whatever. The sun shone as usual, and the laws of nature maintained their even pace. Encouraged by this indifference of the god to defend himself, the Christian rabble rushed upon the statue, and pulling Serapis off his seat, dragged him in pieces through the streets of Alexandria that the Pagans might behold the disgrace into which their great god had fallen. Thousands of Pagans, seeing how helpless their gods were to avenge this insult, deserted Paganism and joined the Christians. As soon as the ground of the temple was sufficiently cleared, a church was erected on the ancient site. The Alexandrian library was the next point of attack. Its shelves were soon cleared, and you and I, and twenty centuries, were most lamentably deprived of the intellectual treasures which our Greek and Roman forefathers had bequeathed unto us.*

Thus the Library of Alexandria and the Museum wended its way through the turbulent history of the Empire and outlived it by a short space of time, although paucity of sources makes it difficult to reconstruct an exact chronology of events. Its research probably reflected the foment of the times, and, while Neoplatonist in the main, also attracted other religious scholars, especially Jews, from Hellenistic times onward. **Repeatedly rebuilt, modified, and burned**, the few facts that can be determined about its long history justify its semi-legendary status. Haven for scholars of all kinds, its purpose as a center for learning was its eventual downfall. Enduring through Hellenistic civil strife, Dynastic war, the transition from kingdom to Roman province, and the abuses and good fortune it received through the sometimes capricious actions of successive emperors, it could not withstand the violent beginnings of Christianity which the city of Alexandria itself largely shaped.

Now, in closing, if you have been a reader of Bet Emet Ministries for any length of time by now you have seen the corruption of the Hebrew Scriptures when translated into Greek by the Hellenized Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt. Whereas the Ancient Egyptians understood the God of the Cosmos and related Eternal concepts and His message to mankind in allegory, symbolism, and myth many who would come later would take these simple truths of Egyptian Religion and "LITERALIZE" them into religious dogmas at Alexandria that blind us to the simple truths that God originally gave mankind. **Later Rome will emerge upon the screen of world history with its desire to mix politics and religion and in so doing make sure that all mankind, to the best of their ability, will fall prey to their "brand" of religious thought where these "literalized" religious tenants were to be accepted by all; either through proselytizing or sword. But the task was not easy as first thought knowing as they did that they had to destroy and bury for all time all remnants of the knowledge that existed that betrayed their plagiarism and literalization of these prior allegories and**



**myths.** There was no bigger threat to Roman domination of the world than the Library of Alexandria which housed these precious volumes of collected world knowledge (science and religious works) which betrayed not only the Roman theology of the day as false but exposed them for what they truly were: apostates themselves from the original Divine Revelation first given mankind in this world. **This Library and storehouse of world knowledge was the greatest threat to the Roman civil-religious agenda and it had to be destroyed and this knowledge kept from the common man.** It was been estimated that the library contained more than a half a million volumes before its destruction. This kind of information had to be destroyed and Rome would make sure that it was, and with the later battle for supremacy between Eastern and Western Christianity in which Western Christianity and Constantine would win then the world is plunged into the Dark Ages to which mankind lived blind to these Divine Truths once cherished by the sages of the past who first gave us the revelation of God in the first place.

The Museum of Alexandria was founded at a unique place and time which allowed its scholars to draw on the deductive techniques of Aristotle and Greek thought, in order to apply these methods to the knowledges of Greece, Egypt, Macedonia, Babylonia, and beyond. The location of Alexandria as a center of trade, and in particular as the major exporter of writing material, offered vast opportunities for the amassing of information from different cultures and schools of thought. Its scholars' deliberate efforts to compile and critically analyze the knowledge of their day allowed for the first systematic, long-term research by dedicated specialists in the new fields of science suggested by Aristotle and Callimachus. Whole new disciplines, such as grammar, manuscript preservation, and trigonometry were established. Moreover, the fortuitous collection of documents in an Egyptian city allowed the transmission and translation of vital classical texts into Arabic and Hebrew, where they might be preserved long after copies were lost during the Middle Ages in Europe. Alexandria and its cousins, the Lyceum, Academy, and the younger Pergamon library, were probably the prototypes both for the medieval monastery and universities. While modern scholars often lament the amount of information lost through the centuries since the Museum's fall, an amazing number of Alexandrian discoveries and theories, especially in mathematics and geometry, still provide the groundwork for modern research in these fields. Finally, the methods of research, study, and information storage and organization developed in the Library are much the same as those used today.

**Today, several diggings where the library stood, have revealed scientific and historical documents that would have resulted in the industrial revolution having occurred 1500 years earlier. Among the lost documents included the methods used to build the pyramids and the parthenon, alchemy, natural plant medicine and utopian philosophy.**

Mankind is yet today struggling to regain the knowledge and ground that Roman Christianity took from mankind. **They don't call it the Dark Ages for nothing and there is nothing any more dark than the truth concerning the origins of Christian Dogma!**



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# DO WE FIND CHRISTIAN CENSORSHIP IN JOSEPHUS?

[Do We Find Christian Censorship In Josephus #1](#)

[Do We Find Christian Censorship In Josephus #2](#)





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# WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BELIEVE FOR YOUR ETERNAL LIFE: JESUS OR PAUL? #1

## EXAMINING YESHUA AND HIS TEACHINGS CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE

For many of our readers the information in this article will be startling. After reading this article you will see for yourself that if you follow contemporary Christianity and its teachings then you are following Paul and not Jesus/Yeshua, because Yeshua's message of redemption is entirely opposite to what Paul teaches. I can hear many of you say...."that's not so" or "he is wrong." Let me sincerely tell you that in the beginning, even after my seminary training I did not see it as clearly as I do today. But I beg of you to read this article and THINK...THINK....of what I will show you. For in the end, you are directly responsible before God, and HaShem is sending you and many of His children today appeals to repent and return to the true faith once given to the saints. Time is of the essence, and it will be horrible to die and find out that you followed the wrong faith...a faith that does not save.

One last thing; you might wonder what the end-result should be of such a series of studies. It is our hope at Bet Emet ministries that when you complete these articles the reader will be able to understand that Christianity is best understood and practiced from a Jewish viewpoint which restores the Sabbaths and the Seven Biblical Festivals. Such emphasis is almost totally lacking in the Christian church today. Also, a renewed emphasis in proper tithing and righteous giving hopefully will replace the current perversion of giving as seen in most churches and on televisions today. What you will come to see is that all these above things, and more, embody the true salvation experience. Let us begin...shall we?

## YESHUA WAS A JEW...AND TAUGHT BIBLICAL JUDAISM

I think few will take issue with my statement that in the New Testament Yeshua is pictured as a Jew who believed in Judaism and taught others to be faithful to his religion's precepts and laws forever!

In this article I will quote many verses from the New Testament, and it is important to understand from the outset that although much in the New Testament is unreliable, when we find places in it which agrees with Moses and the Prophets we have found a witness to the Word of God as recorded in the Tanakh (the Jewish Bible). Let us not stagger at the comment that "much in the New Testament is unreliable," because in this article I will show you that many of these New Testament verses oppose Moses and the Prophet, let alone Yeshua's teachings, and are irreconcilably contradictory to the Gospel Yeshua preached which can be found along side them in the New Testament. Both passages confirming that Yeshua believed and both taught Moses and the Prophets regarding salvation, as well as verses contradicting what Yeshua taught, have remained included in the New Testament through the ages. These verses remain for a purpose today. They remain to show the careful reader and student the truth amidst fiction as written in the New Testament.

Likewise, the purpose could well be to reassure Jews who are in doubt about their Judaism, and are thinking of leaving Judaism for Christianity, that **Judaism and Torah has always been and will always be the road to God for the people of God; both Jew and Non-Jew.** Those unsure Jews and deceived Christians perhaps can have their belief in God, Torah, and Israel (Judaism) kindled and can be kept on G-d's pathway by the very same Christian Book through which they have unknowingly deserted their true people and God! Indeed, Jews who already have left their faith as well as Christians who are returning to the Jewish faith once given the saints are daily having their eyes opened to the truths I will reveal in this article. Prayerfully, many will return as baal teshuvah and through repentance turn to the God of Israel, who surely is waiting with fatherly understanding and forgiveness. ***Believe Yeshua in this matter - Eternal life is obtained through Judaism. Paul teaches otherwise and contradicts Yeshua on this matter.***

For devout Jews who were once Christians and Christians who have studied to see the errors of their prior faith and have returned to a more correct and Biblical Sinai faith, the revelations in this article will be very comfortable corroboration of their firm faith in the holiness of the religion of Yeshua; namely Biblical Judaism. Others who read these verses will bring to them their own heritage and will make of them what they will. In other words they will continue to selectively hear what they choose regardless of the facts presented here.

These pages of reverse proof-texts are intended to strengthen the course God set up for Jews as well as Non-Jews and to fortify their faith and devotion to His plan of salvation for all mankind. In effect, here you will discover confirmation of Biblical Judaism's everlasting truth and validity through the words of Yeshua and others in the New Testament. Often this confirmation will conflict with what Paul taught, but more on that later. Now, let's get into it.

## **WHO WILL YOU BELIEVE.....YESHUA OR PAUL? LISTEN. .....YESHUA SPEAKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Matthew 5:17-19, **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one little shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."**

Try and read the above passage over three or four times. Get the intent of Yeshua into your mind and soul. You can read this over and over and never end your astonishment; especially in light of what you have heard preached in your churches. **Remember, these are Yeshua's words saying he is here to follow the law of Moses, not end the law. Until the world ends, the law as written will be in effect.** Jews and Non-Jews who obey the law and teach it are greatly loved by God, while those who transgress the law and teach its transgression are not. Notice that although the word "fulfill" could mean "to complete or end," in this case and context it clearly means "to obey and do." We know this because the following sentence continues the idea that the law will not change until the world ends, which still has not occurred two thousand years later. Just look outside your window.

Luke 16:16-17, "The law and the prophets were until John (the Baptist): since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for **heaven and earth to pass, than one little of the law to fail.**"

Preaching the kingdom (God's rule and reign over mankind through submission to the King's decrees....laws and commandments) is emphasized since John the Baptist, Yeshua said. But the laws of the Torah are still effective and good, to be fulfilled until the world ends. **Notice for yourself that in no way does "until John" signify the end of the law, because the very next sentence substantiates the law's validity forever (easier for heaven and earth to pass....notice again that this has not occurred yet).**



Luke 16:19-20,22-24,27-31, "There was a certain rich man, . . . And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, . . . the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, . . . And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, . . . I pray thee . . . send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: . . . that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent (Yeshua and not Paul). And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

**Answer for yourself:** Is this a New Testament teaching?

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that Yeshua in the New Testament is teaching that making it to Abraham's bosom (Heaven) was connected to listening to Moses and the Prophets?

**Answer for yourself:** What is this parable from Luke really teaching?

Notice first that it is Yeshua and not Paul who is doing the teaching in this story. Yeshua clearly relates in this story that the laws of Moses and the words of the prophets which teach repentance lead the faithful to Abraham's bosom, instead of hell. Moses and the prophets are the pathway to eternal life in heaven according to Yeshua. Yeshua taught this and not Paul. If you will be honest with yourself most of you are typical Christians who read our articles, and the vast majority have been told by their Pastors and Churches that they are not under the Law (Moses and the Prophets), but rather, they are under grace (Paul). They have been told that the Law (Moses and the Prophets) has passed away for Christians and they are no longer under the Law but under grace (Paul's gospel). In other words you have listened to Paul more than you have to Yeshua.

**Answer for yourself:** But how can the teaching of Paul in this regard be opposite to what Yeshua said, and since opposite, who are you to trust for your eternal life?

Matthew 19:16-19 (Mark 10:17,19) (Luke 18:18,20), "... Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him . . . if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments . . . Which? Yeshua said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself "

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that "having eternal life" is connected by Yeshua with "keeping the commandments" (all of these except one are categories of the law and commandments called The Ten Commandments and under each of these categories are grouped 613 other laws)?

**Answer for yourself:** Is Yeshua just referring to the Ten Commandments or is there something we as Non-Jews unacquainted with Yeshua's religion are missing in this teaching?

It may amaze you but upon my study of Biblical Judaism I have discovered that each Tablet of the Law was separated by commandments between man and God and between man and man. In other words, the First Tablet of the Law is dealing with how man relates to God according to God's commandments, and the Second Tablet of the Law is dealing with how man relates with mankind. But more than that, each of the Ten Commandments is best understood as categories consisting of many commandments within the 613 Commandments grouped under each of the ten headings. So in effect, when Yeshua tells this man "thou shalt not steal" he is telling the man to obey all the different facets of the broad commandment, because under such a heading the Bible enumerates the various ways such a commandments can be kept and broken.

**Answer for yourself:** Is Yeshua teaching that eternal life and salvation in Heaven is connected to keeping and observing the Laws of God? The answer to that question is yes.

There you have it. The way to eternal life for both the Jew and the Non-Jew and salvation in heaven, according

to Yeshua, is living like a good Jew and submitting to the laws of the commandments of God. These detailed instructions by Yeshua are plainly presented.

Notice that in the following verses the man asks what more he needed do. And Yeshua replies, to be perfect he should sell everything he owns and give it to the poor and receive treasure in heaven: "and come and follow me." The man, on hearing this, leaves disturbed because he has great wealth and doesn't want to lose it. There is no indication that the "follow me" means anything else but to accompany Yeshua penniless. The message remains intact that observing Torah law gives eternal life. Perfection is another story.

Mark 12: 28-31 (Matthew 22:36-40), "... Which is the first (great commandment in the law) commandment of all? And Yeshua answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets)."

So, Yeshua selected Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18 as the greatest two laws. This was very Jewish of him, as most rabbis would completely agree, especially Rabbi Hillel. He chose the Shema prayer, the Jew's affirmation of G-d's oneness and dedication to love of Him together with Judaism's great moral teaching of loving people with the love you have for yourself. What could be more indicative of the essence of Judaism?

Luke 10:25-28, "... Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him. Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

**Answer for yourself:** Did you make the connection between "inherit eternal life" and "thou shalt live" as also referring to eternal life? I hope you did because this is typical of Hebrew parallelism.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you noticed that in Luke 10:25-28, Matthew 19:16-19, Mark 10:17-19, and Luke 18:18-20 something very important is repeated?

**Answer for yourself:** What is it?

Namely, that possessing and inheriting eternal life is always connected with **doing something..... not with believing something!**

**Answer for yourself:** How does Luke 10:25-28 teach us more than we learn from Mark 12:28-31?

The writer of the Gospel of Luke goes one step further than the just given, Mark 12:28-31. Here we have the New Testament teaching us of the indisputable link between the "doing" of the commandments of God and eternal life, which is the reward for obeying them.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Yeshua is teaching in the New Testament that eternal life is to be taught from the Law.....the same Law that tells us "what to do" and what you most likely have been told has passed away or which you are no longer under?

It is evident that Yeshua said, in the New Testament no less, that the law of Moses, as epitomized in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, is the pathway to personal salvation and eternal life. Yes, Yeshua said this as found in the New Testament. Let us continue.

Mark 12:32-34, "And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: **for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart (alone as the one God), and with all the**



understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to **love his neighbor as himself**, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. ... Yeshua . . . said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God . . .**"

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that acknowledging the oneness of God, and not the Trinity or triuneness of God, is connected with the reward of God's kingdom and eternal life?

**Answer for yourself:** Did you likewise notice that loving God and one's neighbor who is created in the likeness of God is connected with inheriting God's eternal life?

I John 5:3, "For this is the love of [for] God, **that we keep his commandments**: and his commandments are not grievous

**Answer for yourself:** Since we are told that loving God is connected to eternal life, did you notice the New Testament teaches **"how" the love for God is to be manifested?**

**Answer for yourself:** Does the New Testament teach us **that loving God is manifested through the keeping of the 613 commandments?** It sure does!

This is a straight follow-through of Mark 12:28-31, which connects the acknowledgment of the oneness of God, loving Him, and loving ones neighbor as written in the law, with the reward of G-d's kingdom. Burnt offerings and sacrifices are secondary to the commandments in Judaism and always have been. With no Temple, there is no doubt about this low degree of importance. This passage demonstrates Yeshua' Judaism through and through. Notice likewise that the term "Master" means good teacher, not anything more.

Matthew 7:12 (Luke 6:31), "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should **do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**"

If you thought that "do unto others" is not Judaic or that it is different from "love your neighbor as yourself" you see here that it is totally of Jewish origin. Yeshua declared that it is the law and the prophets. It is Judaic.

Luke 11:28, ". . . blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

Notice also with me that when the writer of Luke penned this verse, that there was not a New Testament in existence and that the only possible identity we can give to "the word of God" is the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings....the Jewish Bible.

Matthew 7:21, "Not every one . . . shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Again we find the expressed will of the Father in the Law, Prophets, and Writings...the Jewish Bible.

Matthew 3:15, "... it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness . . ."

These powerful statements are tucked in between verses which emphasize other ideas. But they can stand alone. And, standing alone they are Judaism's own. Yeshua believed that the will of God is revealed in the word of God, the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew Scriptures we learn the law of Moses (Torah) and the Prophets. Thereby, we can perform righteousness as God desires by adhering to what they teach. This Yeshua believed.

Luke 19:8-9, ". . . half of my goods **I give to the poor**; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, **I restore him fourfold**. And Yeshua said unto him, **This day is salvation come to this house forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.**"

What comes next is very important to keep your ears open. **It appears that Yeshua believed that even a partial fulfillment of the commandments of the Torah is sufficient to be accepted by God.** In the above verse it is recorded for us that Zaccheus repented by observing 2 commandments. **In fact, as taught by**

**Yeshua, even by rectifying transgression of the Torah's laws and doing good deeds a person is deserving of salvation. As Jews trust, it is the trying to please God, it is the effort, not the success in total compliance with G-d's ordinances which is required of us to be righteous and gains us salvation.**

**Answer for yourself:** How confident should we feel about our salvation if we have followed teachings that state that obedience of the law or the striving to observe the laws and commandments of God don't matter any longer because we are saved by “grace” or that this same law that Yeshua connects with eternal life has been taught to us as if it has passed away and of little importance in our lives any longer?

**Answer for yourself:** Are we absolved by God to not try to choose those things to please Him by keeping His commandments? Is this conduct really connected to eternal life as Yeshua taught, or is he wrong and Paul right?

All the more reason to study to learn how to acquire mitzvoth and commandments, thereby taking upon yourself the yoke of the Kingdom of God. Such obedience to commandments is both pleasing to God as well as our demonstration of our love for Him and our fellow man. To do otherwise is not to love God, but rather, show our ambivalence toward Him and our neighbor.

**Luke 13:28, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when *ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*"**

Keep your ears open for this as well. Here Yeshua said that the fathers of Judaism and the goodly Hebrew prophets are all accepted into the kingdom of God. **Evidently, good Jews need nothing more than the Hebrew religion for life eternal in Yeshua' own belief.**

**Now for the hard part. Notice that Yeshua also said that many of his followers (the “ye” in the above verse) will not get into G-d's kingdom and inherit eternal life and salvation because of their sinfulness.**

**Answer for yourself:** Does this same New Testament teach that “transgression of the law is sin”? Yes.

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice what is missing from the above words of Yeshua?

**There is no Pauline religious belief system mentioned as a means of salvation for the followers of Yeshua!**

**There is no Christological "belief" presented here as an antidote for spiritual wickedness for mankind.**

**There is no “easy believeism” taught by Yeshua or his Apostles as a way to eternal life; on the contrary, every time he and the other Apostles emphasize the same thing; namely an earnest attempt to live by the commandments and laws of God for eternal life!**

**If you have paid attention so far in this article I have shown you repeatedly that Yeshua repeatedly connects eternal life with keeping and observing the Law and Commandments of God.**

**Nowhere does Yeshua teach that a belief “in him” brings for its adherents eternal life! In fact he teaches just the opposite!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



**John 4:22, "(to Samaritan) Ye worship ye know not what: we (the Jewish people) know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews."**

**Yeshua "worships" what Jews worship, namely God.**

**Answer for yourself:** Salvation is of whom...the Jews (Jewish theology) or the Christians (Christian theology)?

**This passage from John 4:22 is even more startling when one realizes that the Samaritan woman who is part Non-Jew mixed with Jewish heritage and ancestry. In other words, she is a mixture; not only of blood line but religious teaching as well. She is a perfect example of the Christian today who follows Paul instead of Yeshua. He has part right and part wrong.**

**Lets look at Paul where he get some things correct.**

**I Corinthians 6:9-10, (Paul) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."**

**Answer for yourself:** In this passage are you aware that Paul is in full agreement with Yeshua and his teachings on eternal life?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that there are commandments in the Torah forbidding each of the above conducts?

**Although Paul adds some of his own ideas, the listing of "thou shalt nots" is derived from the commandments. He stresses what he considers unrighteousness and Paul says that transgression of the Law prevents people from earning reward of heaven. Paul, here, reveals his faith in the teachings of the Torah and its stance on eternal life. Paul is in agreement with Yeshua and the other Apostles and their teachings on inheriting eternal life. So far so good.**

**But I wish I could end here but I cannot. In the next article we will look intently to where Paul deviates from and teaches against Yeshua's teachings concerning eternal life. This exercise will be difficult for many, but as I have tried to show you, such an exercise to recover truth is very necessary because your eternal life is dependent upon whom you believe and follow....Yeshua or Paul. More to follow in the conclusion to this article. Let us now look at Paul's Salvation Message and see if it agrees with what you just read.**

**Shalom.**



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## WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BELIEVE FOR YOUR ETERNAL LIFE: JESUS OR PAUL? #2

### EXAMINING WHERE PAUL DEPARTS FROM YESHUA AND HIS TEACHINGS CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE

Paul shaped the Gentile Church after 70 C.E. in a manner which stripped away all links to Judaism and cursed it at the same time. The New Testament in places says Judaism is bad and abandoned by God, while Christianity is good and beloved. In other places the New Testament teaches just the opposite as you were shown in article one of this series. In places the New Testament says the law of Moses is not valid and the Covenant is dead for the Jews. Instead of Moses being taught to all mankind, Paul teaches that the Church's laws and the existing Covenant is dead for the Jews as well as Non-Jews. Instead, the Church's laws and the New Covenant take their place. While Paul advanced separation from Judaism, Yeshua announced Judaism's greatness. The same New Testament in which you just saw Yeshua promote Judaism, in other places debases Judaism through Paul. I just showed you that Yeshua was a practicing, believing Jew who taught faithfulness to his religion's Torah and the Jewish way of salvation. Yeshua affirmed Torah, Moses, and the Prophets as the way to God and eternal life. He and his family all observed the Jewish customs, holidays, and Saturday Sabbath in the synagogue. Yeshua said personal salvation is obtained through Judaism and not another way. In fact Yeshua would command that such teachings be taken into all the world whereby all Non-Jews be taught to "observe those things" Yeshua had commanded of his followers. Paul and his brand of Christianity, in contradiction to all that had been both believed and taught before by Moses, the Prophets, as well as Yeshua, has announced a new way to salvation, through belief in Yeshua's vicarious atonement for sins and resurrection, not through faith in God and obedience to Him through His commandments, but through belief in Yeshua's death for sins and resurrection from death.

**Answer for yourself:** Can you find just one time where Yeshua teaches the same salvation doctrine as espoused by Paul?

What I ask you to do is keep the teachings of Yeshua in focus as you read Paul. **The New Testament, in places, contradicts itself. That is a fact.** You must be sharp enough to see it for yourself when you read. **No matter what Paul says he cannot invalidate Yeshua's own words in the same book.** It is a matter of who you will believe. If you listen to Yeshua, as I have laid out for you, you see that he proclaimed continually Judaism's eternal truths. Paul will not. Now let us look at Paul.

### PAUL CONTRADICTS HIMSELF....DID YOU EVER SEE IT BEFORE?

What is the most perplexing for me when studying Paul is that he is not consistent in what he says. Most of you have never probably seen this but I will in the remaining pages attempt to reveal to you the contradictions that come from the mouth and pen of Paul regarding salvation. When we look at Yeshua his message is consistent



with what has always been taught by Moses and the Prophets. But with Paul we have another matter because he won't always agree with what he has said before. But if you are not sharp in your Bible study you can easily overlook such things. Let us begin our critical examination of the message of Paul on salvation.

Remembering what Yeshua just said about eternal life and observance of the commandments let us contrast Paul's view on the matter.

**Answer for yourself:** Does Paul in Romans 2:13 agree or disagree with what Yeshua has said about eternal life and the observance of the commandments of God? Well, let's read it and see.

Romans 2:13 For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

So far so good. Paul in this verse agrees with the message of Yeshua regarding acceptance and eternal life with God..

But just wait. Now on the back of the same page in my Bible where the above verse was quoted from Paul, we see Paul writes something totally different and contradictory to the teachings of Yeshua in Romans 3:28:

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

**Answer for yourself:** In light of what I just showed you can you justify Paul's quick turn-around on this doctrinal stance so quickly, let alone a change in the same epistle?

Notice that within the space of 44 verses Paul reverses completely his stance on justification and righteousness through obedience to the law and commandments of God. Just 44 verses!

**Answer for yourself:** Did Paul teach "doing the Law" for justification AFTER THE CROSS in Romans 2:13? DEFINITELY YES!

**Answer for yourself:** Does Paul contradict himself in Romans 3:28? DEFINITELY YES!

**Answer for yourself:** So what are we to believe in the face of such contradictions of Paul when contrasted with the teachings of Yeshua and the other Apostles which teach otherwise than Paul?

**Answer for yourself:** Seeing this material for yourself, who are you going to believe for your salvation....Yeshua, Moses, and the Prophets and their message of salvation or Paul and his message whatever it is in its final form?

I Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Yeshua, and by the Spirit of our God.

Please take note that the above verse says that those who "were" transgressors had been helped by the Christologic message of Paul and belief in his gospel which taught justification of the unG-dly through belief in the death and resurrection of Yeshua for eternal life.

**Answer for yourself:** How did that happen?

Let us understand what is really being said by Paul in this verse. Let us remember that Paul has just previously taught in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that the heathen who are guilty of the transgression of the Laws of God is led to death and separation from God, let alone the loss of eternal life. Having understood this, then we can understand his message intended for Non-Jews whereby he uses "Yeshua" literally as bait to get the Non-Jew to

believe in "Paul's Yeshua" as a way for their eternal life. Let us understand that Paul used cunning (become all things to all men in order to win some) in not telling the heathen he has to accept the Torah right off the bat, but rather shrewdly uses this "Pauline Yeshua" and relaxation of the Torah in his effort to win converts from the heathen gradually. Because Paul's adherents among the Non-Jews, in patterning themselves after such a Jewish Rabbi and his ethical teachings, would gradually develop lives of ethical and moral conduct which would assure that they become more G-dly than before. Such is repentance which is the first step in coming to God. Of course, if you give up evil you are closer to God, Christianity's way, Judaism's way, or any other way.

But there is one important difference from those who Paul was attempting to teach and you...the reader of this article. You are not like the heathen, but rather, most likely have been raised in church most of your life. With your religious background and your love for God most of your life what excuse do we have not to obey God fully and choose those things which please him which I have demonstrated is His Law?

Luke 1:46-47,50-55, "And Mary said, My soul Both magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

**Answer for yourself:** Did Mary, Yeshua' mother, call the God of Judaism, the same God who gave her People the Torah for salvation her Savior or did she, based on her new revelation, call her son Yeshua the "new" Savior?

Mary knew what most Christians don't. That's because today's Christians have read and believe Paul more than the Gospels. God alone is the Savior not Yeshua or His Messiah. Hence, Jews have salvation by God the Father and need no second or alternate source of salvation. She spoke of G-d's greatness and His help of His servant, Israel. She spoke of G-d's message to Abraham's children, that the Covenant is eternal. This was the understanding of Mary after she was allegedly informed that she would have, according to the New Testament, a miraculous virgin birth and that the child would be the Messiah. As you surely can see, she spoke as a traditional, believing Jewish person, not the holy figure of Christianity.

Luke 1:6, (Luke) "And they (Zacharias and Elizabeth) were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

**Answer for yourself:** According to the New Testament does "walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" allow a person to be "blameless" before God? It sure does.

Jews as well as Non-Jews can be free of sin, blameless, following the law of Moses, as exemplified by these two people. Therefore, we know according to the New Testament witness that the law does give justification for eternal life.

Again let us see what Paul has to say on the matter.

Romans 4:3, (Paul) "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

**Answer for yourself:** You most likely have heard this passage your whole life. But do you know what believing truly consists of as spoken of in this verse?

Believe without response, or as James said it "faith without works is dead" is the meaning of the passage. Abraham believed God according to the revelation of God and **RESPONDED** because of that belief. He took his son to Mount Moriah to be offered to God. Abraham had faith and he had a concrete response to that faith.



**Consequently, righteousness in G-d's eyes is believing G-d's instructions and doing as God commands.** In Abraham's situation, it was offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice. **In our situation, it is obeying and following G-d's commandments in His Torah and His laws, not just believing they exist.**

**Answer for yourself:** Do you find that following God's commandments somewhat difficult or foolish to keep and observe since the vast majority of Christianity today teaches because of Paul that the Christian is no longer under the law but under a grace which allows him to break and not keep these laws at will?

Lets see what Paul has to say about being righteous and walking in the commandments and ordinances of God.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this Paul's doctrine as well and does he agree with Yeshua and the Apostles on this major issue? No, again we see where Paul contradicted the teachings of Yeshua.

Rom 3:20-22 Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified** in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now **the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:** 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Yeshua Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe:** for there is no difference:

Remembering what you previously read in the first article concerning the teachings of Yeshua, let us examine closely the above passage from Paul for contradictions to what both Yeshua, Moses, and the Prophets taught.

1. Moses (the Law) and Prophets NEVER taught that obedience of God's laws did not justify, in fact it was just the opposite they taught; namely, that obedience to the laws of God does justify.
2. Moses (the Law) and the Prophets NEVER taught that righteousness existed apart from obedience to the laws of God, in fact they taught just the opposite.
3. Paul discounts what Moses, the Prophets, and Yeshua all taught and held in common, and substitutes his own theology that replaces 4000 years of Biblical Truth with a "BUT NOW" theology of justification before God through belief in Yeshua' death and resurrection.

**Answer for yourself:** Who are we to believe? What do the other Apostles have to say?

I John 5:2-3, (John) ". . . we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For **this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.**"

Earlier I stated that we love God by keeping his commandments. Now we see the second phase of the Greatest Commandment: loving His children and our neighbors. Notice also that ironically only by loving our neighbor are we actually loving God! **Such loving of God and our neighbor requires fidelity to His laws, which are not hard to bear or perform. So, we read here in the New Testament that the commandments of the Torah are to be kept and can be kept. These laws should be observed to demonstrate our love of God and our fellow man.**

**Answer for yourself:** Can I obey literally all of God's laws?

It may be beyond human ability to perform all our duties to God, always and perfectly. But, God gave the commandments which are not hard to uphold, when you use all your good intentions with all your heart. **God's laws require your effort, not perfection.**

Again let us look at Paul.

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:** 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the **justifier of him which believeth in Yeshua**

Again you should notice Paul is teaching a completely different message from what Yeshua, Moses, Prophets, and the Apostles taught. **Again Paul stands alone in his belief. No where is any of Paul's theology can we find references to what Yeshua, Moses, the Prophets or other Apostles taught.**

Rom 10:9-16

9 That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Yeshua**, and shalt **believe in thine heart** that **God hath raised him from the dead**, thou shalt **be saved**. 10 For with the **heart man believeth unto righteousness**; and with the mouth confession is made **unto salvation**.

Again we see that **Paul has a different way of salvation from what was taught by Yeshua, Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles as demonstrated in the first article in this series.** Paul stresses "faith only" for righteousness and not what Yeshua, Moses, the Prophets, and the other Apostles taught; namely walking in the commandments of God for righteousness.

**Answer for yourself:** Who are you going to trust for correct teaching for eternal life...Paul or Yeshua, Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles?

If you are honest with yourself up to now I have repeatedly shown you that Yeshua's message revolved around keeping the Commandments and ordinances of God. Yeshua both taught and knew for certain that love for God and those created in His image could only be accomplished by adhering to a standard of righteousness (God's laws) set by God and not by man. Thus the need and availability of God's laws and commandments, **which when earnestly attempted to keep produces acceptance and salvation. Remember God requires our effort and not our perfection.**

Again look at Paul and his views on the law.

Romans 7:12,14,16,22, (Paul) "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. For we know that the law is spiritual: . . . I consent unto the law that it is good. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:"

I Timothy 1:8, (Paul) "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;"

**Answer for yourself:** Does it stand to reason that God would need to replace something that is holy, just, spiritual, and good?

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that Paul even said that he delights in the law of God after the inward spirit?

2 Timothy 3:16-17, (Paul) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that when Paul wrote this in his letter to Timothy that there was only the Jewish Scriptures (Law, Prophets, Writings) in existence and that the New Testament would not be canonized till 397 A.D. (almost 300 years later)?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you also aware that Paul is saying that the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings are, at the time of writing of this epistle which is around 30 years after Yeshua's death, profitable for DOCTRINE, REPROOF, CORRECTION, AND INSTRUCTION?

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you find it rather strange that something that is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction for the first church is considered passed away by today's church?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that Paul's writings and his theology were not, even by him, considered



## Scripture?

You should not find these facts surprising since the creation of a New Testament or the creation of an alternate view of salvation and how to attain it was the furthestmost thing from anyone's mind at this time....except Paul's.

I Peter 1:25, (Peter) "But the word of the Lord (the Law, Prophets, and Writings) **endureth for ever....**"

Understanding when Peter wrote this Paul's teachings were very limited in scope and accepted by only a few. In fact scholars today teach us that in no time during Paul's life did he have over 50 adherents to his message. In fact Paul would later say "all in Asia have forsaken me." All in Asia? This again shows you his message had a very limited scope since men from James continually followed him around to "undo" his teachings. Thus you can better understand why Paul was required to appear before James twice in his life. Literally this was to answer charges as seen in Acts 21:21: "And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs."

What I have demonstrated to you in this article is that Yeshua continually walked after the customs of Moses and the Prophets. Paul did not. Tragically we have grown up in Churches which did not follow Yeshua, the Prophets, or the customs as well. We grew up most likely in Churches that followed Paul and literally oppose the teachings of Yeshua, the Prophets, and the Apostles.

**Answer for yourself:** How are we to reconcile that the Law endures forever but your church teaches that Christ is the end of the Law and that the Law has ceased and that we are no longer under the Law but grace?

**Amazingly, the verses presented above from the pen of the Apostle Paul and Peter affirm the validity of the laws and the commandments of the Torah.** They are described as sacred and beneficial, effective and everlasting. So you must face the fact that after the cross Paul at one time believed the laws of God to be holy, just, spiritual and good. So did Peter for that matter.

Stop here and ask yourself this:

**Answer for yourself:** If the Torah is all these things of God, shouldn't the laws be performed and Biblical Judaism, which is the embodiment of such laws, be observed by all Jews and Non-Jews?

Romans 10:5, (Paul) "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which **doeth those things shall /live by them.**"

**Answer for yourself:** Did you again notice that the Apostle Paul states in agreement with Moses that "righteousness is of the law" and "that those do those things in the law" shall "live" by them (eternal life)?

But again another conflict of Paul is seen below.

Romans 3: 21 But now the **righteousness of God without the law is manifested**, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

**Answer for yourself:** How are we to understand Paul's comments about a righteousness "without the law" in light of Yeshua's teachings that connect all righteousness with observance of the commandments?

**Answer for yourself:** How do you reconcile that Paul speaks of **"righteousness without the law"** in Romans 3:21 and **"righteousness which is of the law"** in Romans 10:5?

**Answer for yourself:** Are you willing to trust contradictions like this from Paul for your eternal life?

**Answer for yourself:** Although we are warned by Paul not to believe another "gospel," is it not evident to you

that in comparison to Yeshua and his message about eternal life that ironically it is Paul who teaches “another gospel”?

**Answer for yourself:** Which of the two teachings are we to trust for our eternal life as taught by Paul....”the man which doeth those things (law) shall live (eternal life) by them” [Romans 10:5] or [Rom 10:9] “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Yeshua, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”?

The Hebrew Bible teaches that the Torah's laws lead to virtue, which is rewarded by everlasting life. Paul, in this passage from Romans 10:5 admits that this is the message of Moses in the Holy Scriptures, who communicated G-d's will to the Hebrew people. Then he contradicts again this only 4 verses later!

James 5:16, (James) "... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

I John 3:22, (John) "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

**Answer for yourself:** Could some of our prayers not being answered and our lack of receiving what we ask of God be because we believe we are under grace and not under the law and commandments of God and don't attempt to know let alone keep as many of them as possible?

These two verses, from two different Apostles, show that keeping commandments and being righteous are connected. Both lead to G-d's hearing us, being pleased, and helping us. The verse quoted is very Judaic in nature, and that's a fact.

James 2:8, (James) "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well."

**Answer for yourself:** Is James telling us we “do well” if we fulfill and keep the law? Sure is.

A person is good if he obeys the golden rule as given in the law of Moses.

James 1:27, (James) "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Here is the golden rule made specific and said to be the basis of religious requirements. Also, to be pure from worldly evils in general makes for a religious person. These are Jewish ideas, totally.

Let us look again at Paul.

Galatians 3:21, (Paul) "Is the law then against the promise of God ? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

Here is where you have to read close as well as remember what you have already learned from reading Yeshua and the other Apostles regarding the law and its connection with eternal life. Strange as it may be to read, Paul is, in the first part of the verse anyway, seemingly lending support to the validity of the law of Moses. Now for a problem which most fail to grasp its significance. Paul is double-minded. Remember I told you that he contradicts not only himself but Yeshua and the other Apostles? Here again is another place where Paul deviates from the message of the other Apostles as well as the early church. For Paul says "if" the law could be effective Moses' law would suffice for salvation. Paul is in reality stating that it is his personal feeling that no such law exists which is connected to salvation. For Paul the condition "if such a law existed" indicates that such a law and condition does not exist...at least for Paul!

**Answer for yourself:** What? Is this a complete reversal by Paul of what he has said previously in some of his other epistles let alone a complete contradiction of the teaching of Yeshua and the other Apostles? It sure is.



**Answer for yourself:** Well, have you with your own eyes earlier in this article already seen that Yeshua said that keeping the commandments is the path to salvation and the law is effective to this end? If you read the article you have. This produces quite a dilemma for the Christian.

**Answer for yourself:** Does Paul agree or disagree with the teachings of Yeshua regarding salvation and eternal life? He does not!

Therefore, Paul, if he "believes" Yeshua, must conclude that righteousness is obtained by one's effort to follow and pattern one's life after the Scriptural laws. But this is not the message of Paul therefore we must question if Paul really "believed in Yeshua."

Notice that Paul actually contradicts Yeshua on this essential matter and, in effect, created Christianity's separation from its Hebraic roots in Judaism.

Paul claims that sin is not overcome, but is created, by the law. Ironically, it is Paul's teaching, not Yeshua's, which invalidated the law for the budding Church. Such destroys the teachings of Yeshua and the other Apostles!

## **WERE WE WARNED ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE PAUL BY YESHUA? AND HAVE WE HEEDED THE WARNING?**

Let's read what Yeshua said about this kind of opposition. In Matthew 10:24 (Luke 6:40) (John 13:16) Yeshua said, "The disciple (Paul) is not above his master (Yeshua), nor the servant (Paul) above his lord (Yeshua)."

**Answer for yourself:** So we ask, whose statements take precedence...Yeshua's or Paul's?

**Answer for yourself:** Who is to be believed...Yeshua or Paul?

You have to decide that for yourself. We only desire to lay the materials out for you in such a way that you can make an intelligent decision.

**Answer for yourself:** What will you trust for your salvation...the message of Yeshua or Paul?

**Answer for yourself:** Which is truly linked to eternal life and God's salvation.....Christologics (believing in Yeshua) or Judaics (following the faith of Yeshua)?

**Answer for yourself:** What is the real message of salvation of God since the New Testament teaches two ways which are mutually exclusive of each other.....faith in Yeshua or adopting the faith of Yeshua?

**Let me warn and encourage all of our readers that if you should "believe" on Yeshua to be saved, believe his teachings about the eternal and effective holy law of God revealed by Moses and begin to do them. Begin a life before God where you tell Him that His laws and commandments are important to you and that you choose to try to do them to the best of your ability because you know they please Him. Begin to live by as many as possible for in them you demonstrate your love of God and those created in His image. And you will be saved as a Jew or a Non-Jew.**

Paul also writes as follows:

**Romans 14:14, (Paul) "I know. . . that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."**

Certainly, this is true. Jews consider things unclean because God announced it in the Torah, not because they are unclean of themselves. The law of kashruth (kosher) is G-d's law, as detailed by those who seek Him. G-d's ordinances create uncleanness, not the thing itself. And Jews and Non-Jews who want to please God and get close to Him keep the kosher laws. This is what God desires of us.

**Romans 3:1-2, (Paul) "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."**

**Romans 9:4, Romans 10:2, (Paul) "Who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God . . ."**

**Romans 11:29, (Paul) "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."**

**Acts 2:5 (Author) "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men . . ."**

Jews have a fervor for God and are devout, said Paul. In other words, Biblical Judaism promoted enthusiasm for God. Jews were given the Covenant, the law, the prophets, and the promises. Jews minister to God by being His Chosen People. There is benefit, much benefit, in being Jewish. Paul even bolsters the firm foundation of the Torah, G-d's gift, lasting for eternity, without God changing His mind, without repenting of His Torah. That is what Paul actually said.

**Notice that Paul, however, in a complete reversal of what he said elsewhere, is recorded to having believed that all these positive features of being Jewish are canceled, and of no avail, due to the Jew's lack of belief in Yeshua the Christ.** We will leave Paul's reasoning and reversal to others. Instead, we ask you to keep in mind his positive appreciation of Judaism. **And also remember that Yeshua said, in effect, that Judaism is of God. Yeshua, himself, taught that "Jews for Judaism" is the way even for the Non-Jew.** We have shown abundant evidence of this in our present article.

**Answer for yourself:** Who is the authority you choose, Yeshua or Paul?

**Ephesians 6:2-3, (Paul) "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."**

**Matthew 15:4 (Mark 7:10), "For God commanded (Moses said), saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."**

These verses are Paul's and Yeshua's utterances, condemning anyone who doesn't bestow honor upon his parents, as taken from the Ten Commandments. This means dutifully regarding them and respecting them, and **implicitly honoring your heritage as well.** This commandment is considered important enough to be put forward separately. Therefore, shaming your parents and their teaching by turning from them and the God of their heritage is prohibited and deserving of worldly death as well as loss of life in the hereafter. This is also what we read elsewhere in the New Testament.

**Luke 5:37-39, "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."**

Yeshua's saying appears to fit Judaism and its offspring, Christianity. To carry this analogy through, the new wine, Christianity, should not be placed into the old, Judaism. This, of course, is just what happened. In order for it to be good, the new should be nurtured separately. Both are then properly maintained, the old as it should be and the new as it should be. This did not occur. Sadly, the new has caused great harm to the old by claiming



to succeed it, while mixing with it. And the new, by so doing, has harmed itself. Isn't that the proper conclusion to be drawn? Taken one step further, Yeshua also said that those who know the old, Judaism, prefer it.

**Answer for yourself:** Shouldn't you, as a Non-Jew and most likely a follower of Yeshua, prefer it too?

**Answer for yourself:** Whose teachings will you trust to lead you to eternal life...Paul's [which are filled with contradictions of Yeshua, Moses, the Prophets, the Torah, as well as the other followers and Apostles of Yeshua who knew him personally and walked with him 40 days after his resurrection], or Yeshua's [which agree totally with Moses and the Prophets and which contains not one contradiction among them]?

I would think having read this article it is rather obvious.

## NOW FOR THE BIG QUESTION

Since now you have seen for yourself that Yeshua's and Paul's way of salvation differ, then you should be asking yourself "Why"? What you will come to see if you continue your diligent search for truth is that the New Testament documents which you have relied upon since your childhood as "received from God" are no such thing at all. Upon close scrutiny you will come to find that they are a collection of both truth and error; the problem is discerning one from the other. As you have already seen we cannot have two conflicting paths to salvation. There are many other discrepancies contained within these documents; many of which go unnoticed by those who do not devote a considerable amount of time for study into these areas. We at Bet Emet Ministries have and continue to do so in order to present you, our readers, the absolute best of scholarship in these areas in hopes you will be led to the truth before you die. Your rewards and standing in the World to Come hinges upon it. We realize that the reason for so much confusion today in the Christian community stems for the multiple contradictions within the New Testament which blurs "the faith once given to the saints". It is our hope by revealing to you the hundreds of misquotations of the Jewish Scriptures, the numerous Jewish Scriptures taken out of context by the New Testament writers to serve their own anti-Semitic agendas, and the gross mistranslations contained within it as well that you might come to see the truth for yourself.....Yeshua was not a Christian and does not want you to follow such Gentile Christian doctrines that destroy the Sabbath, the Biblical Festivals, Monotheism, true righteous giving of the Tithe, true spiritual warfare, etc. Today we have a collection of writings that billions of people have accepted as "authoritative" for their faith and practice which are anything but that. If you have the courage to continue your study...you will be shocked, saddened, broken, and ashamed before you finish. You will see for yourself the greatest deception foisted upon mankind by the Roman Religious Establishment....a substitute faith that opposes what the real Yeshua believed at almost every turn of his life. You might be saying to yourself now: "those are big charges...can he prove it"? I would only ask that you prayerfully study and use the intellect that God has given you to see if what I say does not add up. You will never be sorry you did, and eternally grateful you continued in this rather difficult study. Shalom and may the LORD'S blessings overtake you.



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## DID PETER REALLY SAY THAT PAUL'S WRITINGS WERE CONSIDERED SCRIPTURE?

In-depth study on my part, as well as others for over 15 years, have led us to the inescapable conclusion that the New Testament writings were never to be understood as Scripture on par with the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), the Law, the Prophets, or the Writings. I have taken a lot of heat for this from many who have failed to study deeply enough to see the truths to which I bow my knee. Let me exonerate myself and others from the slander of many because we recognize that the ONLY Word of God is the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings....the Bible Yeshua used.

In many attacks upon myself by other Christians they inevitably get around to quoting Peter where he classes Paul's Epistles with "Other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16). Taken at face value as read in the English my opponents seem to have a good case...that Peter considered Paul's writings as Scripture.

**Answer for yourself:** Did the writer of Second Peter intend to say Paul's writings were Scripture? Lets go a little deeper than the English shall we?

*2 Pet 3:16 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (KJV)*

Let us examine the word for "other" in the Greek: First from Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

3062 loipoy- remaining, the rest

- the rest of any number or class under consideration
- with a certain distinction and contrast, the rest, who are not of a specific class or number
- the rest of the things that remain

Notice the ideas of "contrast, distinction from, and not belonging to a specific class. The word carries the idea of separation and not inclusion. Since the word carries the idea of "separation" then the idea of identification of both being contrasted as the "same" is impossible. Thus the verse, instead of saying both Scripture and Pauline writings are "the same" it says just the opposite; they are not the same because one is not in the same "class of documents" as the other. Since there is no doubt that the Jewish Scriptures are "NOT Scripture" then the other must be by definition of the word. Simply said the Pauline writings were not understood in the first century to be on par with the Jewish Scriptures; in fact much in them was vehemently opposed by the Apostles and the Jerusalem Church.

If we are to be truthful to the word used in the New Testament writings of Peter we should now clearly see that he was referring to a group of writings in **CONTRAST** to Paul's writings. No where in the



understanding of the word are we to force the precept that both writings [Jewish Scriptures & Pauline literature] are to be considered the "same." The **contrast** in the intent of the word is very important in this regard. The idea from the word used in the Greek is the contrast of Scripture to documents "NOT" of the same class..see the definition above!

Notice also the concept within the word to things that "remain." Inherent in Peter's idea is a contrast to a fixed set of documents which remain in his day and are identifiable. In referring to "the rest" of something it is apparent that the knowledge of them and their identity are known and the contents of them identifiable. Such cannot be said for the writings which comprise our New Testament today for at the time of Peter's comments about Paul's writings the four Gospels had not been written, nor had Hebrews, Revelation, and many other books which are in our Bibles today. What I am saying is that to interpret Peter to mean that Paul's writings are considered "other Scriptures" is a violation of the truth behind the words. The complete set of writings had to exist and be recognized in order to speak about the "rest" of them which completes the whole of them. Obviously such cannot be said about the documents comprising our New Testaments today as about half of the New Testament had not been written at this time, nor would be it be considered "Scripture" officially until early in the fourth century.

Let us now examine the word for "scripture" from 2 Peter 3:16 as well. Having demonstrated above that the only "set" of existing Scriptures at the time of Peter's comments to which he referred to the "rest of them" was the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, let us continue.

The Greek word for "scripture" is as follows as taken from Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

1124 graphe-

- a writing, a written thing
- the Scripture, used to denote either the book itself, or its contents
- a certain portion or section of the Holy Scripture

Let us never forget that we read the Bible today from hindsight, a terrific advantage today, but also a great liability as I hope to show you. We must understand that it was not until the fourth century that we have an official New Testament Canon. Up until that time we have oral traditions, many varying from place to place which was circulated among the peoples. In times these oral traditions were written down, many varying to some degrees. These were not books by any means, but small parchments or vellum that contained such oral traditions put in writing to preserve them. It would be much later before we would have codexes or books whereby all the writings recovered could be chronicled in somewhat of an order as we are accustomed to day.

Having said that, please understand that when the writer of 2nd Peter referred to "scripture" he was not referring to a "book" as given in the definitions above, but rather the collection of parchments containing references to the oral traditions which had by that time been committed to writing.

At the time Peter spoke what is recorded in 2 Peter 3:16 the canon of the official canon of the New Testament was over 300 years away in the making. He had no idea at all of "other Scriptures" as we understand the concept today. His reference, as determined by the wording, as well as the absence of recognized "Scripture" other than the Law, the Prophets, and the Writing, reveal to us the only conclusion plausible considering the time and the facts...that he was referring to other "written things."

Let us re-read the verse understanding that the more correct understanding of the word "graphe" would be "written things."

2 Peter 3:16

*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are*

*some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other WRITINGS, unto their own destruction.*

As you can now see such an interpretation is just as credible as saying “other Scripture.” To force the translation to say “other Scripture” must necessitate the completed set of New Testament writings be in existence (“the rest”) [which completes the whole]; they dear child of God the vast majority of them were not existence when Peter referred to Paul in 2 Pet. 3:16.

This may be hard for you to swallow, but in the context of 2 Peter 3:16 Peter could easily have been referring to and CONTRASTING Jewish Scriptures (Law, Prophets, Writings) with Paul's “other writings” which were hard to understand and had no intention of calling Paul's writing "Scripture" or hold any notion that Paul's writings were on the par with the Jewish Scriptures.

So, I hope you have seen for yourself that to force the conclusion that “other Scriptures” in English must refer to our New Testament is not only in error, but an impossibility owing to the lack of their existence at the time Peter spoke. Shalom

**Answer for yourself:** What is the tragic implication of this for the Christian to finally realize?

Simply that our Bibles should be what they always were in the days of Jesus....a collection of the Law, Prophets, and Writings ONLY and any other such "writings" are secondary to say the least and when these "secondary" writings contradict or conflict with the Law, Prophets, and Writings (as they often do) then they are to be discarded and neglected as spurious documents and frauds. This is a major problem for the New Testament and those who understand the context and wording of 2 Peter 3:16.





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## THE SON OF GOD AS "THE CHRIST"

### THE LINK BETWEEN THE "LOGOS" AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY

If you want a challenging and a most surprising religious study then let me recommend an in-depth study of the origin of religious concepts such as the "Son of God," "the Sophia," "the Logos," and "the Christ". What to your amazement you will find is that these religious concepts have been among mankind since the beginning of time and represent some of the earliest Divine Revelations given to mankind. Of course the names might change depending upon nations and culture but the underlying religious concepts are the same. What is important for our study is the knowledge of the fact that this spiritual idea was a fundamental religious idea of the age right before as well as after the first century where we look for the emergence of Christianity. We will discover upon examination that these religious concepts like "the Christ" and "the Sophia" are ideas which Christianity assimilated from preexistent religious teachings and presented to world in a new way.

Most of us are familiar somewhat with the Old Testament and Judaism's view of its God. Judaism has a long history understanding its God as the sole authority and supreme being which has endured throughout the ages. Little has changed for centuries upon centuries. But several centuries before Christianity, Greek thinkers had arrived at their own concept of monotheism. Because they perceived the universe as moving in obedience to a stable law, they postulated a single cosmic mind or governing force behind it. This is know as the "world soul" or the "soul of the Universe." Strands of ideas before Plato became consolidated in Plato, and out of his school came later ideas which, if they did not all go back to the Master himself, were attributed to him and called "Platonism."

This Platonic conception of God was that he was an Absolute Being, a Unity, that he constituted pure mind and inhabited a world of pure spirit. He was not and never could be a part of the imperfect world of matter and the senses, nor could he make any personal contact with it. To humans who inhabited the material, changing world he was inaccessible and incapable of being understood. This is the meaning of the word "transcendent." God is a transcendent being, totally separated from the material universe. God was indefinable.

Platonism taught that the governing force of the universe (God) was something which lay outside matter. God was the true reality while the visible world was only a distant, imperfect reflection of him. Thus the universe was "dualistic" (in two parts). This might sound simple but big problems lay ahead as men reasoned that this understanding of God did not satisfy the cry of men's hearts for God. Surely a compromise was needed otherwise mankind could have no contact with God at all and that was impossible for humanity who believed they were created in the image of God. Thinkers reasoned:

- For how was God to be revealed if He possessed no interface with the world of humans?
- How would humanity benefit from what God had to offer if there were no channel between them?
- How, indeed, had the world even come about if God was so remote?

**Answer for yourself:** How was this problem to be handled?

Out of necessity men had to come to an understanding and bridge the gap between the realm of the invisible pure Spirit and the realm of visible matter. Out of necessity some intermediate force or being had to exist for the link between the Spirit and matter to be connected. Many religious concepts were envisioned to explain this distance between the invisible God and the realm of visible matter. The first task of this "assumed" intermediary had been creation. In Platonism, the process of creation can be described by saying that the mind of God produced Ideas, and another aspect of this mind, God's creative energy (which Plato called the "Demiurge"), took these Ideas or Forms and fashioned copies of them out of matter, thus producing the material world perceived by the senses. All these elements in the mind of God, his Ideas, the creative forces, were seen as "intermediate" and came collectively to be referred to by the term Logos (literally, "Word").

**Answer for yourself:** Did this concept of the "intermediary" begin with the Greeks or can it be traced as far back as Egypt? Yes it can for we first meet the concept of "the Logos" and "the Word" of Creation in Egyptian theology.

The Platonic Logos was thus an emanation of God and God's point of contact with the world. In addition to the Logos being "the" agent of creation, the Logos was the "revealer" of God to mankind! It was God's Logos that revealed God, His nature, His divine will and was the channel of divine aid to the world. The Logos was the bridge between the world of pure soul or pure Spirit and the world of physical matter. The Logos was also the image of God according to which humans were created.

Platonists tended not to regard the Logos as a personal being, but more an abstract force. For some, however, the Logos could provide salvation.

**Answer for yourself:** Did this religious concept of mediation always remain as a "non" person? No. We find the incarnation of "the Logos" in revealing document entitled *Discourse to the Greeks*. This document has in the past been erroneously ascribed to Justin Martyr since it speaks of the Logos as instructing and having "ceaseless care over us," making "human beings gods." Here, for the first time, the Logos has become a personal divinity!

**Answer for yourself:** Is this *Discourse to the Greeks* a "Christ" centered document and a Christian document? No. But yet we begin to see the emergence of ideas which will be assimilated by key thinkers in the soon to emerge religion of Christianity. .

Owing to the problem of bridging the gap between the realm of pure Spirit and the realm of physical matter the impetus of the age was to bring the intermediary between God and the world closer to "literal" matter. This intermediary has to be more like mankind yet he is pure Spirit. Efforts began to mold this spiritual concept into a more personal being which could be understood as more accessible on a human level. This intermediary between the realm of pure Spirit and the physical realm of matter was to be "the Son of God." The Son of God was also therefore called "the Logos."

There are two ways to view "the Son of God":

- The Logos - Son of God dwells within God's creation. It is internal. A strong monotheist like Philo, a Jew, and who was the most prominent philosopher of Hellenistic Judaism would stop short of making his Son and the Logos a personal divine being. Philo of Alexandria, Egypt, is the foremost example of the input of Greek ideas into Jewish thought, a phenomenon which produced as important type of physiology and culture during this period, called "Hellenistic Judaism". Instead, Philo envisioned Moses as a man into whom the power and qualities of the Logos had been infused. Philo stressed that the Logos dwelled within mankind and that it was external to mankind. The Divine Spark of God was within God's creation; especially His highest creation.



- But other Jews did not feel the same rigid restrictions toward God, and could envision their Son as a personal divinity beside God in heaven.

*From the Logos of Greek and Philonic philosophy to Paul's Christ Jesus is hardly any distance at all once these religious concepts were enlarged*

## THE JEWISH PERSONIFICATION OF GOD'S WISDOM

Philo, a Hellenistic Jew, embraced the Logos and associated ideas in his synthesis of Hebrew and Greek religious concepts.

**Answer for yourself:** What ancient Jewish concept existed at this time that also expressed companionship with God and also seen involved as the agent in Creation as we have seen previously with "the Logos"? God's Wisdom.

Mainstream Judaism had its own intermediary figure going back centuries, certainly as old as Plato if not older. The Jews, unlike the Greeks, never saw God as inaccessible. Jewish scribes of the period after the Exile presented God as making himself known and working in the world through a part of Himself they called "Wisdom." There are those who maintain that "Wisdom" was simply a poetic way of expressing certain of God's activities, but most scholars will admit that the portrayal of Wisdom in the biblical and extra-biblical literature makes her a distinct personage or force (Helmer Ringgren, Word and Wisdom, p. 118, 132, etc.).

This was no "Son" of God, however, for the figure of Wisdom was a female. Let us take note that the grammatical gender of "wisdom" in Hebrew is feminine! Wisdom took on a status and personality of her own. She developed her own "myths" about coming to earth, although there was NEVER any thought of her being physically incarnated.

Here is what the Old Testament Book of Proverbs has to say about Wisdom (from 8:1-36):

"By the gate, Wisdom calls aloud: 'Men, it is to you I call . . . I am Wisdom, I bestow shrewdness, and show the way to knowledge and prudence. . . The Lord created me the beginning of his works. when he set the heavens in their place I was there . . . I was at the Lord's side each day. . . Happy is the man who keeps to my ways.'"

There are two important aspects of Wisdom here:

- First, she is "preexistent," that is, she was with God in heaven before the creation of the world.
- She is associated with God in creation, serving as God's agent in the process of creation:

*"In wisdom the Lord founded the earth and by understanding he set the heavens in their place."  
(Proverbs, 3:19)*

**Answer for yourself:** What should we have noticed here?

We should have noticed that the religious themes of "pre-existence" and being an "agent in creation" are familiar to what we have read in the New Testament concerning Paul's Christ. These same spiritual attributes are given to the "Spiritual Christ" in the religious thought of Paul.

*Eph 3:9 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (KJV)*

*2 Cor 8:9 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. (KJV)*

*Gal 4:4 4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (KJV)*

*Phil 2:5-6 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (KJV)*

*Col 1:15-16 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (KJV)*

*Eph 4:8-9 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (KJV)*

Paul shares with us in the above passages the pre-existence of "the Christ." Paul pleads that converts live as sons because "God sent forth his son"; argues for self effacement from the fact that Christ, being in the form of God, "emptied himself"; argues that "the Christ" is the first of God's emanations that is responsible for the creation of all later things; both in the invisible spiritual realm as well as the visible physical realm. As "Lord from heaven" Christ provides the pattern of our resurrected humanity; as he first descended, so he has ascended, the measure of his triumph and assurance of ours.

Baruch 3:37 gives us a line which, even though originally intended as a reference to the Torah (the Jewish Law contained in the five biblical books of Moses, which mainstream rabbinic thought identified with Wisdom), may have had a profound influence on the future:

*"Thereupon wisdom appeared on earth and lived among men."*

**Answer for yourself:** Was this one of the footsteps on the path that eventually brought to earth a different emanation of God-the Son? Perhaps the writer of the hymn to the Logos which was adapted as a Prologue to the final version of the Gospel of John turned it into a song of the incarnation:

*"So the Logos (Word) became flesh and dwelt among us." (Jn. 1:14)*

In the "Wisdom of Solomon," perhaps the most important surviving piece of Hellenistic Jewish writing, we can see a clear and exotic blending of Wisdom with the Logos. This document was almost certainly written in Alexandria, probably in the early first century CE. Like the Logos, Wisdom is now the divine power active in the world, the spirit that pervades and governs all things. She, too, is pre-existent and an agent of creation. She is God's "throne-partner," a step away from Christ sitting at the right hand of God.

*24: For wisdom is more moving than any motion: she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness. 25: For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. 26: For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness. 27: And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. 28: For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom. 29: For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all*



*the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it. 30: For after this cometh night: but vice shall not prevail against wisdom.*

**In the above passage notice the parallels with Paul's Christ:**

- **Wisdom (she) is the breath and power of God**
- **Wisdom is the expressed image of God**
- **Wisdom is all powerful and can do all things**
- **Wisdom dwells within the souls of the righteous**
- **Wisdom existed before creation with God**

**It should be now obvious that the concept of God's Wisdom (she) and Paul's Christ are the same concept and idea!**

## **THE SON AS "WISDOM" AND THE "LOGOS"**

**Answer for yourself:** Have we ever read about God's "Wisdom" in the New Testament and not noticed it?

Similar ideas and concepts that we encounter in the *Wisdom of Solomon* saturates the New Testament epistles. We only need look at the opening verses about the nature of the "Son" in the book of Hebrews, a document which comes either from Alexandria, or from some Palestinian circle with close ties to that city's philosophy.

*Heb 1:2-3 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did we not see above in the *Wisdom of Solomon* that Wisdom (feminine aspect of God) was God's agent in creation, the expressed image of God, and the power of God as we now find expressed though the agent of God's Son? We sure did!

**Answer for yourself:** Is then Wisdom (she) and God's Son the same? Yes they are! God's names in the Bible are both masculine and feminine and we find this expressed through different ways where personification is used to express these nuances within the Godhead. God's Wisdom (she) and God's Son (Christ) are the same idea!

The hymn in Colossians 1:15-20 is stamped with the same imagery:

*Col 1:15-19 15 Who (He...God's Son) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;...*

As we saw before where God's Wisdom (She) is the image of God, the first of God's creations, the agent in all other creations that follow, the sustainer of all creation, and pre-existent with God we now find the identically same concepts expressed though the masculine agency of God's Son. **Paul tells us the same story as we saw in the Wisdom of Solomon only he changes the agent from the feminine Wisdom to the masculine Son.**

**Paul himself tells us that Christ:**

Is the power of God and the wisdom of God

*1 Cor 1:24 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (KJV)*

Is the very image of God:

*2 Cor 4:4 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

Is the agent of creation, channeling the source of all things that resides in the Father:

*1 Cor 8:6 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (KJV)*

**Paul and other early Christian writers are speaking of Christ in exactly the same language as we find previously in the broader philosophical world, both Greek and Jewish.**

**Answer for yourself:** Is Paul writing any new revelation when he speaks of "the Christ" or is he retelling what was already known and understood by the people of his day? Paul is only giving a review. **This is not "revelation" but only further "illumination" of prior revelation given to the Ancients.**

**Paul's idea of the spiritual Son has absorbed both the Logos and personified Wisdom.** In reading scripture and imagining he is being inspired to a view of God's Son, Paul is drawing on the prominent ideas of his day and the deeper heritage which lay behind them.

Scholarship fully recognizes this, of course, but most Pastors and Christians don't simply because their studies are deficient in such areas of their faith.

**What is very important for us to now understand is that ALL these current ideas were applied to the Joshua-Jesus.** Lacking explicit historical evidence to the existence of Jesus of Nazareth outside of the one book, the New Testament, then one can assume that if there was a historical Jesus that those who came in contact with him, his apostles and other followers, were so overwhelmed by the force of Jesus' personality, by the things he had said and done, that immediately after his death and perceived resurrection they went out, gathered all this sophisticated mythological theory and heaped it upon the humble Jewish preacher they had followed. This is one possibility but not the only one. **At the same time in so doing we have to also assume that in the process, those followers abandoned all former interest in the details of his life and teachings and presented their master in allegorical terms whereby the personified concepts of Wisdom and God's Son were applied to him. In such a way he became greater in death than ever in life.**

As I said the above is one possible explanation for what we find in the New Testament concerning Jesus. Yet the inherent fallacy in such a scenario is easy to see. In the above passages, early Christian writers are presenting the Son as "the image of the invisible God," etc. They are describing a divine figure in terms of divine attributes. **No identification with a human man is ever made, no writer gives us even a hint that an "application" to an historical Jesus is anywhere in their minds. As suggested earlier, scholars are guilty of reading into the text things they find hard to believe are not there. There is no getting around the deafening silence of the absence of any credible and unforged record of the life of Jesus outside the New Testament!!!**



## ALLEGORY NOW BECOMES LITERAL

If you happen to possess a Harper's Bible Dictionary I would direct you to the comments by D. Moody Smith under the heading of the "Logos". Here we find that he states that "it is not immediately obvious why a man sent from God, even the Messiah of Israel, should have played such a role," referring to the Logos' role as God's agent in creating the world. He is quite right.

That Jews, no less, could assign to a crucified preacher the creation of the universe is beyond belief (THINK!)! But of course they did nothing of the sort. The Jews assigned the role of God's agent in creation not to a man but to the spiritual Son in heaven, just as thinkers before them had assigned it to God's Wisdom and others to the intermediary Logos. Due to the later addition of the "literal" Gospels by Rome when they altered the "allegorical" concept of mediation between the pure Spiritual Realm (God) and the Universe (physical realm) we then lose the truths that were first expressed not only in Marcion's First New Testament which did not teach a human Christ or even a human Jesus. But Rome will change all that through forgery, destruction, addition, and pure invention of this pre-existing New Testament after 180 C.E. through the effort of Irenaeus and others which will follow in his footsteps. The historical man entered the picture only when the heavenly son & heavenly wisdom was later thought to have come to earth and lived a life told of in the Gospels. Thus the dating of the Gospels are crucial. Modern scholarship has challenged the traditional dating of the Gospels as "early" and has brought to light damaging facts to this hypothesis like the absence of any quote from a "named Gospel" by any Christian writer until after 180 C.E. (THINK)!!! Cosmic beliefs about a supposed historical man were much easier to accept when applied long after the "fact," and easier still when created by a largely gentile mind.

On the matter of presumed Jewish response to a human Jesus, one of the common observations about groups in the 2nd and 3rd centuries which are styled "Jewish-Christian" is that they did not regard Jesus as a divine figure. The Ebionites, for example, saw Jesus as a prophet Messiah but not the Son of God. But all these groups flourished only after the first century, and the record of fragments from their documents (as in Epiphanius and Hippolytus) comes from the 3rd and 4th centuries. There is great difficulty in tracing Ebionite views back into the 1st century, especially to the Jerusalem community known to us through the letters of Paul.

Thus, our evidence that Jewish-Christians regarded an historical Jesus as simply a human prophet arises only after the figure contained in the Gospels had come to be widely known and accepted as historical. And this again is quite late; as late as 150 to 180 C.E. In fact, certain preserved fragments suggest that earlier Jewish-Christian sects did indeed envision a heavenly origin for Christ, though not as a Son of God. *"They (the Ebionites) say that he was not begotten of God the Father, but created as one of the archangels . . . that he rules over the angels and all the creatures of the Almighty."* (Epiphanius, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 30.16,4; E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol.1, p.158.)

These observations support the view that Jews, as a general rule, were unable to associate a human man with God. Once Jesus was brought to earth and given a human identity through the Roman Gospels in the mid-second century (produced in refutation of Marcion's Gnostic allegorical "Christ" as presented in his First New Testament in 140 C.E.), Jewish groups who were part of the Christian faith (and carried along like everyone else by the juggernaut of the Gospel accounts of Jesus) could no longer accept divinity for such a figure and had to reduce him to human dimensions.

As I stated above such an attitude surfaces as early as Justin around 150 C.E., whose character Trypho the Jew, in *Dialogue with Trypho*, serves to represent the outlook and opinions toward Christianity current in

**Justin's day, when the historical Jesus was beginning to make inroads into the thought of the time (around 150 C.E.).** In chapter 88, Justin puts these words into Trypho's mouth: "For you utter many blasphemies, in that you seek to persuade us that this crucified man ought to be worshiped." Such an attitude in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, whether among Jews or Jewish-Christians, was not likely to have differed from that of the 1st century, and **thus the entire picture of Christianity (up to this time) beginning with a response to a human Jesus by great numbers of Jews, elevating him to the status of a pre-existent divinity with all of God's titles, must be dismissed.**

## **A CHANNEL BETWEEN GOD AND THE WORLD...'IN CHRIST'**

**Paul's Christ, like Wisdom and the Logos, is God's channel in his dealings with the world. It is not a person yet dwell within every living creature.**

Paul has an expression to convey this idea. In the letters of Paul and those who later wrote in his name, we find the phrase "in Christ Jesus" or "through Christ Jesus" over a hundred times. With Wisdom and the Logos in mind, we can see just what this phrase means.

- ***Rom 6:11 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (KJV)***
- ***Rom 12:5 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)***
- ***1 Cor 4:15 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 1:21 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; (KJV)***
- ***2 Cor 5:19 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)***

**Here Paul is using the idea of "in Christ" to represent a channel of contact with God; Christ is the means by which Christians are "alive" to God.**

**Answer for yourself:** Now that we have seen that Paul's Christ is nothing new then were what Christianity considers pagans alive unto God through their "Logos" and their "Wisdom" and their "Sophia" that provided the foundation for Paul's later "Christ"? If you read Plato and Philo you have a hard time putting these people in "hell" for their understanding and love of God permeate every page of their writings.

This intermediary channel is a Spiritual force that has been present since time began; past, present, and future. **This Spiritual force has no reference to a recent historical event or person; it is only a "Divine Concept"!**

At the opening of 1 Corinthians, Paul says that the congregation at Corinth is:

***1 Cor 1:2 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (KJV)***



**Christ is the medium which links the believers of that city with God himself.**

**Romans 8:39:**

*Rom 8:39 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (KJV)*

**Here Christ is the spiritual force which embodies and conveys God's love. Like the Logos, though in a more personal sense, the intermediary Christ allows humanity to reach God and to receive benefits from him. It is often said that the idea of the Logos pervades Paul, but the word itself is missing. Paul, in his writings, uses other words to express the "Logos" such as "Christ" and "Wisdom of God":**

- *1 Cor 1:24 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (KJV)*
- *1 Cor 1:30 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (KJV)*
- *1 Cor 2:7 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (KJV)*
- *1 Cor 12:8 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (KJV)*
- *Eph 1:17 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (KJV)*
- *Eph 3:10 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (KJV)*
- *Col 1:28 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*
- *Col 3:16 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (KJV)*

**The above passages not only equate "the Christ" with "Wisdom" but again we find Paul referring to the pre-existence of both "the Christ" and "Wisdom of God."**

**Titus 3:4-6 tells us:**

*Titus 3:4-6 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (KJV)*

Normally we have been taught that "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus" is a human being in the New Testament and like we have seen in the Gospels "the Christ" is depicted as such but the earliest epistles teach "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus" ([Joshua-Jesus](#)) as a spiritual bridge between God and the physical creation. Let us remember that in Hebrew there is such a thing as "parallelism" and the Bible is full of antithetical and synonymous parallelism. The above passage is rather simply if you understand that Hebrew thought often repeats itself over and over again by saying the ideas either twice or the opposite twice. Above we have a perfect case of synonymous parallelism where the same idea is repeated twice. The above verse is now to be understood correctly. **God is the ONLY SAVIOR** thru the medium of the **Holy Ghost which is God's agent of**

**salvation to the world.** We have already seen that **another name for the "Wisdom of God" is the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost.** Likewise we **have seen Paul's "Christ" is another term for the "Wisdom of God"** as well. **God is the ONLY SAVIOR and God brings salvation to mankind through the agency of His Wisdom and the Christ.** We will see that these are **expressions of the feminine and masculine attributes of God in His saving grace.** God come to mankind through His Wisdom (the Sophia) and His Christ (the Son). **These again are allegorical concepts ONLY and were understood as such by the Ancients and the believers of the first century.** Only later do we find an aberration of these earliest Divine Truths as these allegories take upon themselves human flesh through the later Gospels. The saving acts which have occurred in the present time are not the events of Jesus' death and resurrection. They are God's granting of the rite of baptism (being born again) and the bestowing of the Spirit (Judaism teaches this as receiving the soul that comes down from Heaven). The **Joshua-Jesus**, if you read the article, is again the allegory by which this channel along which this Spirit has flowed from God to the world. This allegory will take upon itself human flesh when proto-Catholics like Irenaeus refutes the earliest accounts of "the Christ" in Marcion's Pauline New Testament and out comes Rome's "golden calf" which is our current New Testaments today!

**Christ, then, operates entirely on a spiritual level. He is a communicating and sacramental power now present in the world, impregnating the hearts and minds of believers. These are highly mystical ideas, and there is no justification for scholarship's frequent attempt to see the Pauline phrase "in or through Christ" as a cryptic summary of Jesus' life on earth.** (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 87-94).

## "THE CHRIST" HAS COME FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Paul, or a pro-Pauline writer tell us in the Book of Colossians:

***Col 1:26 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (KJV)***

The earliest Christians after Pentecost understood that God's Son (Logos-Christ-Wisdom-Sophia) as a Spiritual entity was **NOW in their day now being revealed to the world.** For them God's Son (Christ-Logos-Wisdom-Sophia) has been "sent" into the world.

***Acts 2:1-4 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (KJV)***

We have seen in earlier articles that the **name of the "Holy Spirit" was also understood to be terms used for God's Wisdom (Sophia-Logos) as well as "the Christ."** Thus in the earliest Pauline passages the early Church understood that God has sent His "Christ" to them and God through His Christ tabernacles within them in a new way.

**Early Christians saw the spiritual Christ as having arrived in a real way, active and speaking through themselves.** When Paul and other writers speak of the "Spirit" sent from God, they are usually referring to the traditional idea of the Holy Spirit, the power and presence of God acting within inspired teachers and apostles. Yet on occasion we see a more explicit identification of this Spirit with Christ himself (as in Philippians 1:19), so that Christ becomes a spirit force in his own right.

***Phil 1:19 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of***



*the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (KJV)*

*Gal 4:6 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (KJV)*

1 John 5:20 reads: *"We know that the Son of God has come (literally, **"is come"** - in the present tense) and given us understanding to know him who is real."* The Son is working among Christians at the present time, imparting knowledge of God.

*Eph 2:17 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (KJV)*

In the same way, we can understand the "coming" in Ephesians 2:17: *"And coming, he (the Christ) announced the good news . . ."*

**Answer for yourself:** What was the content of that news as taught by "the Christ" that the writer of the Book of Ephesians mentions?

*"peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near, for through him we both alike have access in one spirit to the Father."* [NEB/my trans.] (Earl Doherty, The Jesus Puzzle, 1999, p. 87-94).

It is very important that you notice that instead of taking the opportunity to refer to some of Jesus' earthly teachings, the writer of the epistles of Ephesians quotes ONLY from Old Testament Scripture: Isaiah 57:19, which speaks of an end-time reconciliation between peoples. Even the preliminary words about preaching good news are based on Isaiah 52:7. This is the Christ who has "come" in the spirit and speaks to the world - a "speaking" found in the Hebrew Scripture ...in the Old Testament Scriptures. The final phrase of the quote identifies him as a spiritual channel to the Father. The writer of the epistle of Ephesians does not give us "one" teaching of the Jesus of the Gospels; not one!!!

## A CHRIST WHO INHABITS THE WORLD OF SCRIPTURE

This fact above has led to an important insight into how the early Christians viewed Christ. Not only is the Son revealed in scripture, the Son **speaks** from scripture. Certain passages in the sacred writings and Hebrew Scriptures were regarded as the voice of the Son, speaking directly to the world.

This is most evident in the epistle to the Hebrews. It begins with the statement:

*Heb 1:2 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Having begun the book of Hebrew by stating that God's Son is not "speaking" then where do we find this message of the Son as spoken of by the writer of the Book of Hebrews? NOWHERE!

In the absence of any teaching of the Son of God in the epistle of Hebrews then this "speaking of the Son" would seem to be something other than the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, for not a single Gospel saying is offered through 13 chapters, not even a reference to the fact that Jesus had taught in an earthly ministry. Instead, when "quoting" the voice of the Son to make his arguments, the author draws on passages from the Hebrew Scripture that are identified as the Son's

## own words.

When seeking to illustrate (2:12) that the Son considers believers to be his brothers, he offers Psalm 22:22, *"I will proclaim thy name to my brothers."* More than one commentator has sought to explain why the writer would not have drawn on such sayings as are found in the Gospels, for example in Mark 3:35: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother." Hugh Montefiore (Hebrews, p. 63) suggests that this practice of **putting scriptural texts into Jesus' mouth was "the tradition of the early church."** That is an understatement of unbelievable proportions. What we have seen and continue to see is that in the complete lack of any historical reference to the Jesus of Nazareth outside of this "one" book the New Testament the early church and writers of the New Testament were left with no recourse owing to the fact that no historical record existed of the human Jesus and any supposed teachings. They were left with pure invention and purposeful misquotation, mistranslation, and misuse of the existing Hebrew Scriptures to which they, as Montefiore stated, put into Jesus' mouth as they created a human "Christ" and put flesh upon him.

**The scriptural 'sayings' are prefaced by a "he says" - in the present tense -showing that in the writer's mind, the Son is an entity who is known and communicates now and today, through the sacred writings, not through any past preaching career on earth.**

Lacking any historical career for this historical Christ the early writers and forgers of the New Testament had to create one to which they did when they refuted Marcion's First New Testament and his Spiritual Christ.

*Heb 10:5 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (KJV)*

**Unbelievable alterations of the Hebrew Scriptures were made in order to create a human "Christ"**. Above we are seeing a quote taken from the Hebrew Scriptures and presented by this writer of the Book of Hebrews that would lead us to believe that Jesus, coming from God, was given a human body long prepared for him in the mind of God. But the actual Hebrew Scriptures says something entirely different:

Psalms 40:6-8 says as taken from the Hebrew Bible:

*"You, O Lord my God, have done many things; the wonders You have devised for us cannot be set out before You; I would rehearse the tale of them, but they are more than can be told. You gave me to understand that you do not desire sacrifice and meal offering; You do not ask for burnt offering and sin offering. Then I said, "See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me". (JPS)*

The Soncino version says in Psalm 40:6-8

*"Many things hast Thou done, O Lord my God, Even Thy wondrous works, and Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to be compared unto Thee! If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be told. Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; Mine ears hast Thou opened; Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I: 'Lo, I am come With the roll of a book which is prescribed me'"*

As we have seen God did not "prepare a body" as the writer of the Book of Hebrew attest but rather God opened the ears of his servant in order that he could understand the Torah and God's message to mankind. This same message God was later to send into the hearts of His children through His Christ. **This is but one example of hundreds to show the reader the early literary creationism by the early writers of the Jesus myth.**

**The writer of the Book of Hebrews views scripture as presenting a picture of spiritual world realities, where the Son operates and speaks. This is the meaning of the epistle's opening statement, for God in this final age speaks to the world not through the teachings of an earthly Jesus but through a new**



**reading of scripture, in which the voice of the Son is to be heard.**

As late as the end of the century, the same phenomenon can be detected in the epistle 1 Clement. In chapter 22 'Clement' says:

*"All these promises (by God) find their confirmation when we believe in Christ, for it is he himself who summons us through the Holy Spirit, with the words: 'Come, children, listen to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'"*

**Clement regards this quote from Psalm 34 as a personal summons from Christ, as though Christ himself is telling Christian readers that he will teach them the fear of the Lord.** When he earlier (ch. 16) describes Christ's sufferings, he quotes a passage from Psalm 22, again presenting it as the voice of Christ himself, telling of his experiences of suffering and rejection through the words of scripture.

**These early writers provide us with an insight into the fundamental nature of early Christian thought.**

- Christ was a spiritual figure and not a human-fleshy individual like we believe today because of the later writing of the gospels where the Heavenly concept of the Spiritual Christ takes upon himself human flesh.,
- The Christ was not a "past event" some 50 years earlier but a present force who was accessible through the sacred writings of the Hebrew Scriptures... not the later forged ones in the New Testament
- Scripture was not the prophecy of the Christ event, but its embodiment.
- The Son inhabited the spiritual world of the scriptures, God's window on the unseen true reality.



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## A BODY THOU HAS PREPARED FOR ME? FULFILLED OR UNFULFILLED?

The following is truly an exciting study which only again serves my point; namely, that many passages and texts within the New Testament have been "theologically" contrived to say completely opposite to the original writer of the passages in the Jewish Bible. In other words they are "frauds." But nobody seems to know this. I did not until I read a book when doing textual studies that alerted me to this "fact." Surely the author had to be wrong; surely the references and quotes in my New Testament, as taken from my Christian Old Testament, were not a fraudulent representation and a purposeful deception. And I thought, at least then, if I compared my Christian Old Testament with the Jewish Bible that there were be few if any discrepancies. I had figured only a few words here and there would be different given the differences in the languages and the translation problems. My friend I had never made a graver error in my life that supposing the above. Upon personal inspection whereby I compared hundreds of passages, line for line, and precept for precept, I found not only a "few words" that were different but "whole theological concepts purposefully altered and distorted" when translated in my Christian Bibles. What had I trusted in...a book that was cleverly altered "here" and "there" to reflect a sect's beliefs over 2000 years ago; and worse yet, that sect who did the original altering was a mixture of Judaism and pagan sun-worship. I had been deceived and I wish to alert our readership to this tragic event that goes undetected by the vast majority of good Christians day by day.

We only need to look at one text to see the "plan" as foisted upon a non-reading public over 2000 years ago let alone a Biblically illiterate Christendom today. The text for analysis is Psalm 40:6-8 as taken from the Hebrew Bible. After reading this passage we will look at how this passage has been "altered" and used completely erroneously in the New Testament.

### Psalms 40:6-8 says as taken from the Hebrew Bible:

"You, O L-rd my God, have done many things; the wonders You have devised for us cannot be set out before You; I would rehearse the tale of them, but they are more than can be told. You gave me to understand that you do not desire sacrifice and meal offering; You do not ask for burnt offering and sin offering. Then I said, "See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me". (JPS)

The Soncino version says in Psalm 40:6-8 "Many things hast Thou done, O L-rd my God, Even Thy wondrous works, and Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to be compared unto Thee! If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be told. Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; Mine ears hast Thou opened; Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I: 'Lo, I am come With the roll of a book which is prescribed me'"

### Now let us examine how this passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:5

*Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*



**Answer for yourself:** How does "you gave me to understand" or "mine ears hast thou opened [in order to understand]" become "a body hast thou prepared for me?"

These verses, as originally written in the Jewish Bible, have absolutely nothing to do with the Messiah. In fact, I fail to see how this has anything to do with Jesus. In the context of the entire psalm David is talking about himself here. Some commentators also admit that "my ears have been opened" could also read "my ears have been pierced." Jesus never had his ears pierced. This simply means the person talking has had his ears opened so he is able to hear the declaration of God's will and thank Him in this Psalm. Obedience to God's law is superior to sacrifice, as is told time and again by the prophets. Always remember that context is important and that more often than not most Christians do not use correct translations; simply because they don't know that their Bibles are "fixed" in rejection toward conservative Judaism. This was done originally by the Hellenized Jews of Alexandria and later only elaborated upon by the anti-Semitic Gentiles of the early church who "crafted" such New Testament documents to support their "sun-worship." Ask them to use a Jewish translation, or better yet, the Hebrew original if you can read Hebrew. Many good translations exist today for the non-Hebrew reading public which make available for the believer an "uncorrupted" text as opposed to the Christian Bibles.

It is debatable that Paul is the author of the book of Hebrews. But for the sake of argument let us say he is at the moment because more often than not, Paul is given credit as the author of Hebrews. That being the case we have a problem then with Paul.

**Answer for yourself:** Does the book of Hebrews, believed to be written by Paul and inspired and infallible by millions of believers today, quote accurately Psalm 40:6?

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice the difference for yourself as taken from the Hebrew text of Psalm 40:6?

**Answer for yourself:** How does "mine ears has thou opened" become "a body Thou has prepared for me?"

**Answer for yourself:** Does Paul quote Psalm 40:6 correctly in Hebrews 10:5? No way.

Paul misapplies or misquotes (or someone later to his letters) Psalms 40:6. "A body hast thou prepared me" is not in Psalms. Paul omits "mine ears hast thou opened".

## THE MISTAKEN MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY....BECAUSE THEY NEVER READ THE HEBREW BIBLE

The number of Christian commentators on the book of Hebrews is uncountable. But, as a representation, I wish to draw you attention to Andrew Murray who wrote a book entitled The Holiest Of All. This is a very important commentary in Christian circles dealing with the book of Hebrews. Mr. Murray, beginning on page 331 begins to tell his readers of the utter inefficiency of the sacrificial system. He assures his readership, like so many of you have been as well, that the sacrifices of the Old Testament had never been what God had wanted. These useless sacrifices were only "types and shadows" pointing to something better, to a spiritual reality, a life in the body given up to the will of God. Therefore Hebrews is the fulfillment of a divine prophecy of David concerning the "body" of Jesus which had been prepared for the Messiah. This body has now been revealed in Christ. He goes on to say that instead of the sacrifices, God prepared a body for Christ to be sacrificed within. Mr. Murray goes on to reassure his readership that when Christ was sacrificed in this "prepared body" that those who believed in him were also sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. This sounds wonderful to the average Christian. In fact it used to sound wonderful to me as an ordained Pastor; that is until I found out the Scriptures that Jesus both knew and read NEVER SAID SUCH THINGS! I had been reading and trusting in lies. I did not have a faithful "translation" of the Jewish Scripture; rather, I had a "free theological creationism" that served it writers' unique religious agenda.

Somebody ought to tell Mr. Murray to read the Hebrew for himself and write a retraction on his book.

And if that was not enough over the years I discovered where the whole ideas of "crucified" solar Godmen came from and it was pagan to the core and this is the basis of the Gospel passion. Talk about being ashamed before God having to find out these truths as an adult; an ordained Pastor no less. I had no recourse but to resign and ask for forgiveness for being a "modern pagan." Simply dear ones, the Jewish Prophets never said all that has been quoted "from them" in the New Testament. Also many of the passages in the Christian's Old Testament read completely different when compared with the same passage in the Jewish Bible.

**Answer for yourself: How hard is it to make a faithful translation?**

Many "sayings" have been put into the mouth of religious heroes in the New Testament as "fulfillments" of the Holy men of old and they are anything but that! Numerous religious doctrines have been propagated and put into the mouth of holy men as quoted in the New Testament which have their roots in sun-worship. The prophets never said such things and if you have a Jewish Bible you only need compare the two "passages" to see that they did not. This is something that the common everyday Christian does not know unless he has cause to look into such matters. Such a study will reveal to you how at choice places in the New Testament statements of theological importance are said; not to strengthen the Jewish faith of Jesus, but to make it look as if Jesus is sanctioning a religion with a crucified savior at its center. These corruptors of truth, as shown in this one simple article, have put into the mouth of the Psalmist David, himself a messianic figure, a statement predicting the incarnation [body that has prepared for me] when nothing of the like ever was intended.

In fact just the opposite was intended. David praises God for Him sharing His Word with David and opening his spiritual sensitivity and his ears whereby he could Hear the Word of God not only with his ears but his heart whereby he might obey the Laws of God and live obediently before his God. This is quite different from this same Paul who would teach others that the Law of God had passed away because for him Christ was the end of the Law. Thank God the Jews did not believe him. Sadly, it is we who have corrupted religious documents who did.





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# WHO ARE THE EBIONITES AND WHAT SHOULD IT MEAN TO THE CHRISTIAN?

The doctrine of Trinity, which is one of the fundamental constituents of Christian dogma, was absent from Christianity during the lifetime of Jesus Christ. The maximum one can grant is that this doctrine started taking shape after the Crucifixion. It took many centuries for it to reach its final well-defined but inexplicable form. It went through a long process of extremely bitter and controversial debates between Christian theologians and philosophers representing different religious, cultural and traditional backgrounds.

It was greatly influenced by the myths and the traditions of various lands which hosted "Christianity" in its early period. The main stem of Christianity, however, which took care of and nurtured the development of "Christian beliefs" and philosophy in its early formative part was of Jewish stock. Jewish influence remained predominant throughout the early part of Christian history. The disciples of Jesus who learned and understood Christianity directly from Jesus and witnessed it in the form of his life, belonged to this stock. They were the primary custodians of Christianity with deeply embedded roots in the holy soil of Jesus' instructions and way of life. It was they who witnessed the Crucifixion and had seen Jesus after the crucifixion.

## THE FIRST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

Early Christians (Jew and Gentile) appear to have been fundamentally divided over both the nature of Jesus and whether to adhere to the Mosaic Law or not. In the second phase of Christian development (after 50 C.E.), St. Paul became the most pivotal character in giving Christianity a new philosophy and ideology. There were fundamental differences of opinion between Paul and James the Righteous. While James looked after the Jerusalem Church, Paul was preaching in the West, particularly to the Gentiles. The Western Church evolved along Pauline doctrinal lines, whereas the Church in Jerusalem developed along monotheistic teachings.

One offshoot of James' ministry were the Ebionites, a sect whose name derives from the Hebrew "ebionim" meaning 'the meek' or 'the poor'. They were the Jewish Christians, for whom Jesus took on the mantle of Messiah and not that of the 'Son of G-d'. They followed the Mosaic law with great zeal, and had their own "Gospel" known in various contexts as the 'Gospel of the Hebrews', 'Gospel of the Ebionites' or the 'Gospel of the Nazarenes'. Here is a description of the Ebionites drawn from various sources.

In his book The History of the Church written in the 4th century AD in Caesarea, Eusebius mentions the Ebionites in the book Vespasian to Trajan. Eusebius, the most renowned church historian, mocks the Ebionite views (remember he is a Gentile in the Western Church), saying that their name comes from their poor and mean opinion of Jesus. According to Eusebius, the Ebionites regarded Jesus as mortal (human and not divine) and esteemed him as righteous through the growth of his character. As Jews, the Ebionites observed the Sabbath; every detail of the Law, and did not accept the Pauline idea of salvation through faith alone. Eusebius also talks of another group of Ebionites who accepted the virgin birth and the Holy Spirit, but refused to accept Jesus' pre-existence as "G-d the Word and Wisdom". They followed a

'Gospel of the Hebrews' which could possibly have been St Matthew's Gospel (written in Hebrew but lost to us today). They observed the Sabbath and the Jewish system, but celebrated the resurrection.

In his book describing the background of the Ebionites, R Eisenman in The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered writes that James (the 'Zaddik' or 'Zadok', meaning Righteous) was the leader of the Jerusalem Church in the middle of the first century (40-60 AD approx.) The branch which was retrospectively called Jewish Christianity in Palestine. The Ebionites developed from this branch.

The Community who followed James were known as 'the Poor', (Galatians 2:10, James 2:3-5) a designation mentioned both in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In many ways, Eisenman feels that the Ebionites were similar to the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They honored James the Righteous, and believed Jesus to be their mortal Messiah, while Paul had become an "Apostate from the Law". They observed the Law and the Sabbath with great zeal.

They held James in the highest regard, while Paul was considered 'The Enemy' as spoken and warned of by Yeshua (Matt 13:24-43):

*Matt 13:24 (KJV) Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. 31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. {measures: the word in the Greek is a measure containing about a peck and a half, wanting a little more than a pint} 34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked [one]; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; {things...: or, scandals} 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Thus according to the Jewish Christians, or Yeshua's church, Paul was one who deviated from the Mosaic Laws and Commandments and was as far as they were concerned the "adversary" (devil). This may be hard for Christians to understand, yet believe considering what you have heard taught



from pulpits Sunday through Sunday your whole life, but what you have heard does not change the facts that have surfaced from both archeology and in-depth Bible study. Somewhere you have to come to terms with James and the early church's view of Paul as handed down to us for those who wish to inquire. One cannot discount their extra-Biblical writings that have come down to us that severely impune the "Gospel" Paul preached to Gentiles, and this explains his resentment to the apostles in Jerusalem as recorded in the epistles (reputed pillars...note the sarcasm in his tone when addressing the leadership of Jesus' church). If you desire serious study into this very important issue I direct your study to this website: <http://paulproblem.faithweb.com>

According to Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln in The Messianic Legacy, the source of the original teachings of the Ebionites, Gnostics, Manicheans, Sabians, Mandeans, Nestorians and Elkasites has been described as the Nazarene philosophy. They refer to Nazarene thought as: 'An orientation towards Jesus and his teachings which derives ultimately from the original Nazarene position, as articulated by Jesus himself, then propagated by James, Jude or Judas Thomas and their immediate entourage.' Their beliefs were:

- **strict adherence to the Mosaic Law**
- **recognition of Jesus as Messiah**
- **belief in the normal human birth of Jesus**
- **hostility towards Pauline views**

There is a collection of Arabic manuscripts kept in a library in Istanbul which contains quotes from a 5th or 6th Century text ascribed to the 'al-nasara', written in Syriac and found in a monastery in Khuzistan in south-west Iran near the Iraq border. It reflects the views of the Nazarene hierarchy escaping from Jerusalem after the destruction in 66 AD. It refers to Jesus as a human being and stresses the Judaic Law (notice that this is the belief of the first century church and those closest to the historical Jesus).

The inescapable conclusion of the scrupulous student of history, language, and Scripture is that Paul's followers "abandoned the religion of Christ and turned towards the religious doctrines of the Romans."

Of all the various doctrines which evolved during the formative stages of Christianity, only those who believed in the Nazarene philosophy can justifiably be given preference. These early Christians were taught the meaning of Christianity by Jesus himself.

## THE ROLE OF PAUL

From the time of St Paul onwards, as Christianity spread to alien lands and pagan faiths within the Roman Empire, it began to be powerfully influenced and bent by the cultures and mythologies prevalent in those lands and went further away from its nascent purity. St Paul did his bit in influencing the deterioration of the "original Christian thought" by introducing his own brand of mysticism. He was neither of Jewish stock nor did he have any direct contact with Jesus, except through his claimed vision. He was already, it seems, under the powerful influence of the alien cultures.

Apparently there were two options available to St Paul, either to fight the strenuous battles against a world of superstitions, myths and legends prevalent in the lands of the Roman Empire from times immemorial or to give in to them and let Christianity change to suit their requirements and ambitions. This gave the Gentiles the message that Christianity was not essentially different from their legends and myths. Paul only recast Judaism in terminology which was already familiar to the Gentile to whom he preached. Thus Paul found the adoption of the second option far more profitable and convenient and let Christianity change to suit the ambitions and philosophies popular in the gentile world.

This strategy worked well in as much as it gained a great number of converts to the new faith which otherwise would not have been easily available. But at what cost? Unfortunately, it ended up only in an unholy competition between noble Christian values and pagan myths. What St Paul changed was only the names of

the pagan gods and replaced them with Jesus, G-d the Father and the Holy Ghost. It was not him in fact who invented the myth of Trinity and introduced it to the pagan world in the name of Christianity, on the contrary he borrowed the myth of the Trinity from pagan mythology and bonded it to Christianity. From then on it was the same old paganism but with new names and new faces.

Pauline Christianity, therefore, did not succeed in changing the doctrines, myths and superstitions of the pagan world but only ended in changing "original Christianity" (Messianic Judaism) in accordance with them. If the mountain did not respond to his call, he decided to go to the mountain.

## THE REALITY OF JESUS

Of course it is anybody's prerogative to choose between Pauline Christianity and that of James the Righteous and other early leaders of Christianity who were the disciples of Jesus Christ himself. But here we want to establish the point that the main stock of Christianity continued to develop along Jewish lines and kept itself aloof from the later innovations which generated the rigmarole and complexities of Christian dogmas we see today for Gentile imaginations such as the godhead of Jesus as the Son, the Trinity, Inherited Sin, Redemption, the rejection and replacement of Israel by the church, etc. The views of the early leaders of the original Church, among whom James the Righteous is prominent, were simple and honest and had no internal contradictions or paradoxes hiding behind a smoke screen of mystery as we confront today in the Pauline churches of our land. A study of the history of Judaism in Christianity establishes beyond question the fact that the Unity of G-d, uncomplicated by the slogan of Trinity, remained the official doctrine of the true Church of Christ in its pristine purity. The faith of Yeshua was Jewish, is Jewish, and will always remain Jewish. It is us who need to reevaluate what we have been taught and believe in light of fact and reason.

Please remember that this short treatise is not an attempt to convert Christians to any faith other than that of the faith both held and practiced by Yeshua (Jesus). It is simply a genuine effort to invite the Christians back to the pure unadulterated faith and practice of Jesus himself. It is a sincere attempt to revert the fiction back to the facts of Christianity. Facts that are certainly as beautiful as they are realistic and satisfy both the head and the heart.

For almost two thousand years, it is not the legends woven around the reality of Jesus Christ that has kept Christianity together and has helped it to survive the challenges of reason and ever growing enlightenment borne out of scientific progress, nor is its survival due to the mystic belief of Trinity. What has held the truth and essence of Christianity together is the beauty of the person and the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is the divine conduct and not the divine person of Jesus that has been so beautiful to adhere to. It was the suffering, patience and perseverance for the sake of noble ideals and his bold upright rejection of all despotic attempts to make him change his principles that is the real backbone of Christianity. It is still as beautiful and as lovable today as it was ever before. It has influenced so powerfully the Christian minds and hearts that they remain bonded to Jesus.

His real greatness lies in the fact that he transcended and conquered the forces of darkness that had conspired to vanquish him despite being a frail human being and no more than a human being. That victory of Jesus is something to be shared with pride by the children of Adam. As we see it from the vantage point of in-depth scholarship, he is one of the most noble progeny of Adam who taught humanity by his example of perseverance in the face of extreme suffering and pain. Not to surrender but to remain steadfast in the teeth of extreme trial was the noblest achievement of Jesus. To share suffering in life is far better than to escape suffering through death. Hence the concept of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus is magnified not only by his death, but by his life lived in total obedience to his Father. Today, we Christians and followers of Jesus can share in his grace.

The greatness of Jesus, we again insist, lay in his supreme sacrifice during his lifetime. All his life, he defied the temptations to compromise, give in and exchange a life of suffering with that of ease and comfort. The same



**cannot be said for Paul, when in-depth analysis of his teachings as paralleled with those of Jesus and Judaism often diverge.** Day in, day out Yeshua confronted death but refused to give in and lived for the sake of the sinful to bring them to life. He conquered death not by surrendering himself to death, but by refusing to bow down to it. He defeated it roundly and emerged from its clutches where a lesser man would have perished. Thus he proved his truth and the truth of his word and message beyond a shadow of doubt. That is how we see Jesus and that is why we love him so. His voice was the voice of G-d and not the voice of his own ambitions. He said what he was commissioned to say, neither more nor less than what G-d had told him to say. He worshipped G-d throughout his life and worshipped Him alone and never did he require any mortal to worship or bow before himself or before his mother. This is the reality of Jesus to which we at Bet Emet Ministries invite the Christians of all denomination and faiths to return.



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## BET EMET MINISTRIES.....OUR VARIOUS WEBSITES FOR YOUR STUDY

- **Craig M. Lyons M.Div.**
- **Bet Emet Ministries**
- **902 Cardigan**
- **Garland, Texas 75040**
- **972-4964238**
- **E-Mail: [bennoah1@airmail.net](mailto:bennoah1@airmail.net)**

If one undertakes the study of Bet Emet's Websites, and understand it is a life's work, then one is prepared to understand what has happened to Christianity down through the centuries and how **Divine Truths, once expressed through allegory, metaphor, and simile by the Ancients who first received the Revelations of God, has been suppressed, altered, and tragically lost today through the "literalization" of such revelations given to us by the Ancients.** This is a tragic story to say the least and renders us as "believers" and "followers of the New Testament Jesus" as idolators and we never know it because our Bibles inherited from Rome are "forged" in key "theological places". If you are diligent to study and learn from what is shared on these multiple sites then over time you will understand how it is possible to follow the "New Testament Jesus" in one way which ends with idolatry and in another way which ends in holiness and righteousness. The key to all of this rest in the true identity of "the Christ," "the Logos", and "Christ Jesus". We are all familiar with these terms but we will see hopefully there is a big difference between what we have been taught about them today and what they meant to the original Christians. Rome's has played a key role in the loss of these Divine truths and the substitution of falsehoods as you will come to see. "Surely that is not possible I hear you say" but I only wish it were so. For your study and thought are these websites developed and revised over the years as Bet Emet Ministries' studies have progressed and deepened and more parts of the "theological puzzle" of Christianity became apparent to myself and others associated with Bet Emet.

**These websites are intended to be "a step by step" process in your pilgrimage of learning. We begin by looking at the surface of the texts and then moving deeper as the websites progress we look often at the hidden and esoteric meanings that lie beneath these same texts. In other words we begin our websites with a "literal-historical" interpretation of "the Christ" and "Jesus Christ" and move later to the "Mystical Christ" and finally to the "Mythical Jesus Christ".** As alluded previously we begin by looking at the "literal historical Jesus" and the texts and explain them "literally" as we have been taught since growing up most like since childhood in the Christian faith we inherited. In so doing it is my intent to show you and separate for you a Jewish Messiah and Judaism's truth from a non-Jewish Messiah and untruths given us by Rome. **As your studies progress it is my hope that you will come to see the depiction of this "Jesus" in the New Testament in a deeper light; not as a historical-literal person but the "personification of Divine truth" that was entrusted to the Jewish nation for the Gentile world. As the websites progress you will come to see just whom this "Divine Christ within" really is and how this concept has tragically be changed by Rome and given a literal-historical life of its own.** It is a real shame that the only Jew to ever came to you and me was this New Testament Jesus dressed up like Constantine and bearing



literalized sunworship concepts which simply are not true in their "literal sense" since they bring idolatry with them. Over time you will come to see the Divine Truth within them however when they remain as allegories as they were intended for it is then and only then can they express the Divine truths as originally intended and as understood by the ancients who gave them to mankind in the first place. Rome changes them and never tells us in the book we inherited; the Roman Bible.

In closing it is my intent as a yet ordained Pastor who desired to serve the Creator and help His children do the same that once this information came to light over the years of my studies I realized that someone has to share and tell others of this deception in order that our worship of the Creator be in "Spirit and in Truth. Bet Emet, Hebrew for "House Of Truth", has done as best it can to present these truths in hopes that your love for and worship of God be likewise.

The order of our study is very important. If you start from the beginning and work your way through these websites as if you are reading the "best of many books" (which you are) then you will end your study with few unanswered questions and you will have arrived at the truth you sought and have a very clear picture of whom God is and what He requires of you, the non-Jewish believer in Christianity today. Sure the trip is hard, long, and time consuming and filled with both tears and joy as you deal with what has happened at the hands of men who served themselves rather than God. But the goal must be kept squarely before you....to come to the Truth once known about God by these Ancients who framed many of the very same religious doctrines that sadly have come down to us altered today and sadly cover the pages of our Bibles. You will come to see that there is a very big difference from the Jewish Bible and the corrupted Gentile Christian Bible we inherited from Rome. This is Rome's doing! All of this is dealt with on our websites and you will get to it in time if you are diligent in your study.

Let us end with one passage from the Hebrew Scriptures:

*14 Then the LORD said unto me: 'The prophets prophesy lies in My name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke I unto them; they prophesy unto you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their own heart.'*

It is time that we do diligent study in order to overcome these "lies" which we have inherited from Rome and others and repent of such error if it be in our life. It is time we search out and return to the faith of our Fathers who carry the Ancients traditions and truths with them. Today we find that in Judaism, the legacy of Egypt. Few know this because of lack of study but the beginning study has been done for you. **It is time you accept the mantle of study which in first century Israel was "the highest form of worship".**

*Lev 20:77 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the LORD your God (the Jewish Tanakh)*

## PRESENTING THE "JESUS STORY" THROUGH THE 4 WAYS OF RABBINICAL TEACHING

The Websites and our spiritual pilgrimage follow but I must say that what I uncovered when getting to the bottom of the origin of the "Jesus Story" is that **the "New Testament Jesus" can be understood in many different ways** and in so doing yet communicate Divine Truth to the reader. I have discovered through my 20 years of study that we basically have 3 different ways to understand "the Christ" and the "Jesus Story" as I and others see it. We at Bet Emet Ministries have covered all 3 different understandings and presentations of "Jesus Christ" through the totality of our websites. Taken in order our Websites take the student through these

### 3 different understanding of "the Christ" in systematic order.

- **Historically**...(myth taught through the medium of a presumed historical person; although not accurate to the existence of a historical person yet important in that it serves as an example to be emulated by all mankind)
- **Mythically**...(personification of the Sun and its path through the Zodiac and the 4 seasons of the year; the equinoxes and solstices)
- **Mystically**...(expressing a hidden teaching, a secret doctrine, given under strict and exacting conditions to approved candidates by the Masters of Wisdom regarding the descent of the Logos into matter, ie., mankind). Paul speaks of this:

*Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Are all three methods of presenting Jesus Christ equally accurate to truth? No they are not and our Websites will provide the evidence you need to not only see this for yourself but make adjustments in your religious belief system when needed. Our focus needs to be on correctly interpreting the Mystical and Mythical Christ and then dealing with the erroneously interpreted "Historical Jesus...the Christ with flesh".

It goes without saying that we all begin to read and study the Bible from a "literal" perspective assuming that it is the vehicle for "literal truth" about Jesus Christ, never realizing that often these stories were written to be understood as allegories by the original writers let alone ever realizing that our "Jesus Story" can be found in identical form all the way back to pre-dynastic Egypt over 13,000 years ago. Bet Emet Ministries began several years ago to present websites dealing with Christianity which at first adopted this **"Literal Interpretation" of Jesus in the "Jesus Story"** since the "literal" approach toward Jesus in the New Testament is taught today by almost all of Christianity as they assume that Jesus Christ was a historical person. **We all grow up in the Western Hemisphere assuming that the "Jesus Story" is a historical reality; that is until we do the serious study of our faith required to get to the bottom of the "Jesus Story" and the religious synthesis within it. Only with the study of Gnostic Christianity did I come to clearly see the Mystical Christ. Many of our websites, especially the early ones from years ago, begin by approaching the "Jesus Story" from this historical -grammatical method of interpretation because this is how we grow up and first get acquainted with the "Jesus Story".** This I felt was necessary to get the reader and student started in order to reveal the greater Spiritual Truths that lay within Biblical Judaism that does not come with the added baggage of idolatry which we find in Gentile Christianity. As a pastor I realized that it takes time for a "seed to grow" and if I strike out and were to say "everything you believe about Jesus is wrong" I would lose any hope of reaching people with the fruits of my studies. **So the beginning study of the Jewish Roots of Christianity follows the Rabbinical Methods of teaching and I applied them to Bet Emet's presentation of the "Jesus Story" and the totality of our Websites.** There are 4 levels of Rabbinical teaching.

### **PASHAT**

The first level of understanding is PASHAT (simple). The Pashat is the literal meaning. It is similar to what Protestant hermeneutics calls "Grammatical Historical Exegesis" and also similar to what Protestant Hermeneutics calls "The Literal Principle." The PASHAT is the plain, simple meaning of the text; understanding scripture in its natural, normal sense using the customary meanings of the words being used, in accordance with the primary exegetical rule in the Talmud that no passage loses its PASHAT (b.Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a). While there is figurative language (like Ps. 36:7) symbolism (like Rom. 5:14); allegory (like Gal. 4:19-31) and hidden meanings (like Rev. 13:18; 1Cor. 2:7) in the Scriptures, the first thing to look for is the literal meaning or PASHAT. This is how and why I developed the first websites and in so doing try to reveal the beauty of Biblical Judaism to the Christian student desiring the truth of his Jewish Roots. For it is in Biblical Judaism do we find our links with Egypt in their purest form thus preserving better than any these Ancient



understandings of God and the Cosmos and man's responsibilities to the Creator. **These following websites approaches "the Christ" as an assumed "historical person" yet never telling the reader that behind this motif of a "historical Jesus" lies the greatest deception know to mankind.**

- **RETURNING TO THE JEWISH ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY...THE FAITH OF JESUS/YESHUA**
  - <http://returntofaithofjesus.netfirms.com>
  - <http://returningtofaithofyeshua.freesevers.com>
  - <http://www.geocities.com/returningtofaithofjesus>
  - (The examination of the Jewish and Hebrew Roots of the Christian Faith as taken from a **literal perspective**. In so doing we expose many of the errors in doctrine and practice of today's Gentile Christianity with special emphasis upon the non-Jewish believer and his Divine place within the Israel of God instead of enmeshed in replacement religion as exists today in Gentile Christianity. We pay no attention in this site to the many problems concerning the Historical Jesus and approach the study from the normal assumption that the historical Jesus is true since that is how most of us grew up believing in the first place...in later sites we look at this problem in greater detail).
- **THE COVENANT OF NOAH & THE LAWS OF NOAH AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**
  - <http://covenantofnoah.netfirms.com>
  - <http://www.geocities.com/covtnoah>
  - (**Now we look in depth to the non-Jewish believer and how he fits into true Biblical Faith.** This is very important information and necessary for every Christian to read and study in detail. This is a very revealing study of the Covenants of God with special emphasis upon the Covenants concerning the non-Jew which are called today the Covenant of Noah comprising the 66 commandments of Noah; included in this site are OT references to this covenant as well and revealing exposition of this same covenant in the NT as taught to the non-Jews in fulfillment of the Great Commission before Rome would change everything in the 4th century; see how the Pattern of Worship was the same for the Jew and non-Jew and how denominational Christianity has missed the mark throughout history due to it's anti-semitic background and dogmas inherited by Rome).
- **THE BIBLICAL "PATTERN" OF WORSHIP & THE GENTILE GOD-FEARER IN THE FIRST CENTURY SYNAGOGUE-"CHURCH"**
  - <http://jewishrootscx.netfirms.com>
  - (Having learned all of this knowledge from the above websites and fully convinced that repentance is needed in my "Christian religious belief system" then the question that should be asked is this one as I see it: ***"If I, as a non-Jew, who had not converted to Judaism, had lived in the first century in Israel and had come into contact with the Messianic Movement within Israel as we find it in Acts 15 for example, then what would I have been taught about how a non-Jew is to "worship" the Creator"? Is there a "Pattern of Worship" of God that I need to know about?*** Other questions come to mind: What was I to do having learned these truths about the early Gentile inclusion into the Israel of God? How was I to worship in contrast as to how I learned from Roman Christianity? How can I bring this understanding into my life today? How can I worship the Creator in "Spirit and in Truth" in light of what I have learned in the above websites that has shown me that I have been badly taught and so badly misguided by my spiritual leaders in Christianity today? If you want those answers then this website is for you. My apologies that it is not finished but under "construction" but better to begin to learn what we can when we can than waste any more time. I trust that in time the website will be finished.

## REMEZ

The next level of understanding is called in Hebrew REMEZ (hinting at a prior truth or a hidden truth that goes beyond the current text). Peculiarities and contradictions in the Biblical texts are treated and presented to the reader as hinting at a deeper truth than that conveyed by its PASHAT. The fun of discovering our Jewish

Roots, Sabbaths, and Biblical Festivals is over and it is time for serious investigation of our inherited faith. **Our Websites get more challenging as I begin using the principle of Remez to hint that there are problems with the "Jesus Story" and begin to question many of the teachings of Christianity and their presentation of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah.** We still approach these issues as if "historical" but as your studies progress you begin to slowly get the picture that there is severe problems with what Christianity teaches about "the Christ" and its presentation of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. It bears saying again that we approach this information yet as if "historical" but as our websites progress we will soon move to the "Mythical" and the "Mystical" presentations of Jesus Christ. You might say we are in the process of cracking the egg shell regarding the "Jesus Story".

• **RETURNING TO THE BIBLICAL FAITH OF JESUS/YESHUA BY EXAMINING CLOSELY OUR BIBLES**

- <http://www.faithofyeshua.faithweb.com>
- <http://geocities.com/thefaithofjesus>
- (We move on and begin to look at our New Testaments since it is within them that we have the core of the problems concerning this Jewish Messiah portrayed as Jesus. Here we encounter examples of such textual and scriptural falsifications in our Christian Bibles, both Old and New Testaments as mentioned in the previous sites.. hundreds of examples where the facts and truths that once existed in the Jewish Masoretic Old Testament texts were purposefully changed in the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures by the Essenes and later incorporated into almost all Christian Old Testaments and the implication of such purposeful alterations by not only the Jews of Alexandria (the Essenes), but the later changing and altering of this solar-mythology by the Gentile Church in their final production.. the New Testament. Here we encounter the change of these Divine Concepts as they become altered and reinterpreted and attached to the life of the New Testament Jesus. So it is necessary that we become very familiar with the document called the New Testament which has incorporated such religious agendas over time)

• **AN UNBIASED LOOK INTO THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...AND THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ITS CANONIZATION?**

- <http://historyofformationofnewtestament.netfirms.com>
- <http://geocities.com/faithofyeshua>
- (Now we must understand how we actually got this New Testament in the first place. This study is as best as possible an unbiased and intense study into the New Testament, its origins, its canonization, the disagreements of the early Church Fathers as seen for hundreds of years in the conflicts and disagreements concerning it, its falsification and purposeful mistranslation of the Jewish Masoretic text, the role of the Essenes in the falsification of the Jewish Old Testament and its impact of the later developing New Testament, and the determination of the role of the Holy Spirit in the production of the New Testament...if any)

• **PAUL...THE TRUE FOLLOWER OF JESUS...OR...SUBVERTER OF THE FAITH OF JESUS AND FOUNDER OF A NEW RELIGION?**

- <http://paulproblem.netfirms.com>
- <http://paulproblem.faithweb.com>
- <http://geocities.com/paulproblem>
- (Now we move to the Paul Problem. Let it be said that I am hard on Paul since he has been presented to us on the pages of this New Testament in a particular way and reinforced by 2000 years of Church Tradition. I must say that I deal with Paul "literally" as this is the way he has again been presented to us on the pages of the New Testament and in so doing I spare no ink in pointing out the problems this presents regarding a Jewish interpretation of "the Christ". Understand that this is a very challenging website which exposes the deception behind the New Testament's presentation of the Apostle Paul...it reveals the truth behind the purposeful manipulation of history and facts to cover up the truth about Paul who was understood by all in the first century to be an enemy of the Jerusalem church and remained so his whole life...I expose what the true religious belief system of Paul really is and show you how it is a synthesis of Gnosticism, Mystery Religions, and



Judaism...along with this I reveal his and later pro-Pauline writers purposeful misuse of the Jewish Scriptures by Pauline writers in their presentation to the non-Jewish world of a new religion and how they made it seem as if Jesus was the cause for it...this is strong stuff and not for the faint-hearted. We will look at Paul in a different light when he is later put into his Gnostic setting which is historically accurate then then we can say "kind things" about Paul then...so hold on...we need to find the "real Paul" and we don't have it yet since Rome forged all but 7 authentic epistles which he wrote and put his name on them...so we have to be hard on Paul since Christians believe that he taught all the things that carry his name. We will see as we study that he did not and the blame for this deception is again laid on the lying pens of Rome....so we deal on this site as "if" Paul was responsible for these writings since we are taught he wrote them all by tradition)

- THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF "THE" MESSIAH....WHY CAN'T THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS AGREE?
  - <http://jewishmessiah.netfirms.com>
  - <http://www.geocities.com/bennoah1messiah>
  - (Now we enter the beauty of Judaism and the truths they taught about their own Messiah and once knowing this then it is easy to contrast them with what we have been taught as Christians that come from our forged Christian Bibles. Ever wonder why the Jews and Gentile Christianity cannot agree on the Jewish Messiah? At last the unbiased truth concerning the Jewish Messiah and with it many explanations as to how the Christian theology concerning the Messiah deviates so drastically from the Jewish Messianic concepts as well as emphasis on the corruption of the Gentile's religious texts (OT and NT) which culminates in the creation of a Messiah which was never prophesied by the Jewish prophets.....the answers for the Gentile Christian are not always comforting but if you want the truth it is here for the interested and unbiased student and true seeker of truth. This is a selective summary of what went before on the other sites where I pull together pertinent information concerning one topic and one topic only: THE MESSIAH. If your desire is to study what the Jewish Scriptures taught about the Jewish Messiah before they were altered and changed as they were purposefully mistranslated into the Greek and later carried over in their corrupted forms into the Christian's Old Testament and New Testament texts, then this material is for you. Along with this site is the examination of text after text not only in it's Hebraic original form but as it was altered and changed thereby causing New Testament believers to ignorantly accept and cherish beliefs about Yeshua/Jesus which not only are incorrect but which render them idolators before God).
- A TRUTHFUL ANALYSIS OF MESSIANIC PROPHECIES IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AS CONTRASTED WITH THE CHRISTIAN TRANSLATIONS...DID JESUS FULFILL THEM?
  - <http://messianicprophecy.netfirms.com>
  - <http://www.geocities.com/bennoah1>
  - (A very detailed examination of the Hebrew Scriptures and how they were later altered when translated into the Greek, Latin, and English versions of Christian Bibles. We trace the corruption of the Jewish Scriptures from the Hebrew in which they were originally written and show how these Jewish Scriptures were later purposefully mistranslated, misquoted, misapplied, and even invented in order to alter the human messiah into a "cosmic Godman" by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt. Later these very same altered passages will become forced "fulfillments" when applied to Jesus in later Latin and English versions taken from the Greek forgeries of the Jewish Scriptures. We show repeatedly how the Greek translations were forged in order to include the Essene concept of their "angel messiah" and "cosmic Godman" and later how this concept would be further adulterated when applied to Jesus some two hundred years later through the further forgery of other Hebrew Scriptures by the Roman Gentile Church. In other words we show beyond any doubt how the Holy Word of God has been corrupted today. No wonder the Jewish people don't believe in the Christian Jesus; their Jewish Scriptures read completely different than those of the Christian Church in "key" messianic places)
- DANIEL 9:17-27: THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS AS TAKEN FROM THE HEBREW

## SCRIPTURES

- <http://seventyweeksdaniel.netfirms.com>
- <http://geocities.com/bennoah3>
- <http://daniel70wks.faithweb.com>
- (We now look at a very problematic piece of prophecy. Of all the Old Testament scriptures translated and quoted (or purposely mistranslated or misquoted) by Christian evangelicals in hopes of finding validation to most of their Gentile Christian doctrines, Daniel 9:17-27 and Isaiah 53 are perhaps the two most popular. In both cases, Christianity relies on a claim that the only reasonable interpretation of those scriptures is theirs. But is this true? Have our Christian Bibles been forged to force fulfillments as applied to Jesus when the true Hebrew Scriptures read differently than our Christian Bibles? Well...it is time to see the truth for yourself concerning Daniel's 70 weeks and then you decide who is right....Judaism or Christianity)

## • THE ESSENE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND ITS LEGACY OF SUN WORSHIP

- <http://essenechristianfaith.netfirms.com>
- <http://essene.freewebsites.com/>
- <http://geocities.com/essenecx>
- (As stated earlier Divine allegory of the ancients has been "literalized by Rome" and presented to us in our Christian Bibles. We begin to see this through a comprehensive and challenging investigation into the true origins of the Essene-Christian faith as we begin in Egypt and it's worship of God. In so doing we spend some time understanding Egyptian Sun-worship where astral-theology and solar-worship was **personified** into "savior Godmen"...Osiris being both the first and the **"pattern" of all that followed**; tracing such solar beliefs through successive Gentile nations and making note of similarities as well as differences, until we come to the Essene/Qumran cult, who, in rejection of Biblical Judaism because of their inability to assume the Priesthood following the Maccabee war, evolved away from Biblical Judaism and adopted these astral-theological religious ideas which had more in common with Egypt, Persian, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Pythagoreanism, etc., than with Judaism, until we end up with a "corrupted Judaism" which is more commonly known today as Christianity. **What we find is that the Essenes "literalized" these prior Divine Allegories concerning Divine Truths expressed by the Ancients through the medium of myths and symbols.** It is in the hands of these apostate Essenes where these Divine concepts were "literalized" and were purposefully included in a falsified translation of the Jewish Old Testament called the Greek Septuagint. In so doing these Divine Concepts lose their original meaning and these reinterpreted doctrines become parts of the Greek Old Testament for the Greek speaking world and for all later Christians and the Christian Church; thus providing the substrate for all later quotes of the New Testament. The bottom line being that personified Sun-worship was applied to the life of the Jewish Messiah as recorded in the New Testament and it is we, not knowing that these concepts were only to be taken allegorically, have been misled to see in them a "literal" understanding when they never were originally intended to be taught as such. In so doing we spend a lot of time with the texts in order to see how this was done and how extensive this misrepresentation is in our Bibles).

## • THE PAGANIZATION OF THE FAITH OF YESHUA ...AND THE BIRTH OF "GENTILE CHRISTIANITY"

- <http://paganizingfaithofyeshua.netfirms.com>
- <http://www.paganizingfaithofyeshua.freewebsites.com>
- (We move on now to look at more "literalization" of Sun-Worship as it was applied to the Jesus of the New Testament by the writers of the this New Testament. This is a very, very challenging study and expose of how Sun-Worship today as masqueraded as "orthodoxy" in Christianity...the subject is diverse and will require adequate reading on your part but well worth the price as you learn of the origin of the Sun Myths which were later personified by the Indo-Germanic nations and later written into the translation of the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt. These accounts would be later embellished by the Gentile Church as they applied them to the life of the Jewish Messiah as represented through this Jesus as they build it off the falsifications of the Greek Old Testament as altered by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt; this site



exposes the false theology connected with Jesus which lines almost every page in the New Testament in one way or another...a through understanding of this site, as well as the others of Bet Emet Ministry, exposes beyond any doubt the lies and idolatry that has been foisted upon unsuspecting Gentiles who are yet today pawns of this theological deception and antisemitism of Rome)

This approach, teaching God's higher Divine truths through the vehicle of a godly example, the "assumed historical Jesus of the New Testament", works well up to a point because in doing so we are presented with a "Godly" example of a life to be emulated as found in the Jesus of the New Testament (for the most part). A life patterned after the Jesus of the "Jesus Story" will hopefully issue forth in one bearing the fruit of morality and ethics and one lived in the Fruit of the Spirit. This is the reason why Israel does not evangelize today because Christianity has accomplished for them their task as God's Priesthood. As a pastor I wish they could have accomplished this without the masked idolatry connected with the "Jesus Story". The non-Jew has learned of the God of Israel and has learned how to live in peace and harmony through the teachings of Christianity. Sadly in all of this the main character, the Jewish Messiah, has been so badly misrepresented in the character of Jesus who, for example, is made to cleanse all foods and abolish the kosher laws in Mark 7:14. This is rather strange for a Jew who is obligated to observe Kosher. Hopefully you see the problems of what I speak. Again through our websites the student is made aware of the problems inherent in places in this New Testament's depiction of the New Testament Jesus. Yet, in such a presentation then Jesus is the non-Jew's "pattern" for he, real or not, is the only Jew to ever witnessed to us and came knocking on the doors of our lives as non-Jews. Sadly the Jewish community is closed to the non-Jew for the most part due to the tragic treatment of their people by the Christian Church these last 2000 yrs. As I say often it is sad that when we answered the door of our lives as we heard the "knock" of this New Testament Rabbi named Jesus that we did not possess, at that time, enough knowledge of the truth about "the Christ" and the true "Jewish Messiah" that we could not recognize that this Jew named Jesus, as God's "light to the Gentile world", came dressed like the idolator Constantine teaching a replacement religion. Lacking this knowledge which Bet Emet's Websites provide the student unsuspectingly we bought into the Roman counterfeit and no wonder the Jews cannot accept this Roman Jesus as their Messiah. Good for them! But hopefully as your studies mature you begin to see that there are other ways to understand the "Jesus Story" but surely understanding the "Jesus Story" as a historical truth concerning a literal person who lived 2000 years ago and who embodied the historical Jewish Messiah is not one of them.

## DRASH

Another level of Jewish hermeneutic and understanding the Scriptures is called in Hebrew "drash" meaning "search", this is the allegorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. Creativity is used to search the text in relation to the rest of the Scriptures, other literature, or life itself in order to develop an allegorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. This process involves eisegesis (reading of the text) of the text. Ironically as I found this expression or interpretation of the texts reflected most accurately the type of "belief" of the earliest Christians who were not only looking for a historical Jewish Messiah to be revealed but at the same time understood that the "logos" or "the Christ/Sophia/Egyptian Karast" lived within all mankind. This understanding of "the Christ" reflects Paul and his 7 authentic epistles where he teaches the "Christ within".

As you might expect a few years later, as time allowed, Bet Emet provided a website dealing with the Mystical Interpretation of the "Jesus Story" and "the Christ" as we showed that the religious beliefs of the earliest "believers" who were called the first "Christians", long before Rome emerged to dominate the Christian faith, did not accept a historical Jesus at all but rather understood "the Christ" as a Divine Concept that lives within every man and woman and is not exclusive to just one person as is portrayed today by "literalistic Roman Christianity. It is in this site that we restore the earliest Gnostic Christian understanding of the "the Christ" as it existed for almost 5 centuries before being utterly destroyed by Rome with its replacement religion we have today which I call "Literal Christianity".



- **MARCION AND THE "FIRST" NEW TESTAMENT...WHO WERE THE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANS AND WHAT DID THEY BELIEVE ABOUT "THE CHRIST"?**

- <http://firstnewtestament.netfirms.com>
- (Now we put all the pieces together and the whole picture comes into focus. **We now look at the true Paul, a Gnostic which never taught a human Jesus Christ but rather "the Christ within" in his 7 authentic epistles.** We trace in this website how the earliest "Christian" believed in the "Christ within" and not "a Christ without". We see how the ancient religious allegories were understood not only by these ancients who were given them but by the Gnostic Jews and Gentiles in the earliest centuries of the church as well long before Rome will come an "literalize" all of it and give it a fictitious historical timeline in creating a "historical Jesus". In so doing we will see how the earliest New Testament expressing these allegorical Divine truths is butchered by Rome and destroyed and how we end up with the forgery we have today. Never let it be said that archeology and hard study are not our friends.

An unbiased study of History will show you that there is not a shred of legitimate historical evidence anywhere that the Jesus Story originated as the biography of a man named Jesus, and quite a lot of evidence that it did not. An unbiased through study of Comparative Religion will reveal to you that the basic plot of the Jesus Story, from beginning to end, including the motif of a crucified savior, already existed in many other religions thousands of years prior to the alleged time of Jesus and if you continue such dedicated studies into Astronomy and Solar Mythology you will find that beyond any doubt the "Jesus Story" is nothing more than an allegory for what would naturally be the oldest and most important story humans would notice and write down, that of the annual passage of the seasons of the year and the path of the Sun through the celestial sphere and the 12 Houses of the Zodiac during the year. Personification of the Sun through the sky as found in the story of ancient solar and lunar gods follow in chronological procession through the year the exact chronology of the "Jesus Story" when personified from Matthew chapter 1 through then end of the book.

This website will be a lot different from anything you most likely have ever studied. Growing up in the Western Hemisphere we are traditionally taught a "literalistic" and not an "allegorical" or "symbolic" understanding of Christianity. This "literalistic" interpretation of "Jesus" and "the Christ" is based upon the inherited religious documents we received from Rome which we were taught to accept as infallible and inerrant without every questioning them. However great advances in Biblical Studies and archeology have been made in the last two hundred years and one in particular in the last 50 years has made a startling impact upon Christianity and few know of this. I am referring to the discoveries of the Nag Hammadi Library along with the Essene's Dead Sea Scrolls in the last 50 years which has turned our traditional Roman understanding of Christianity upside down and basically taught us that almost everything we had through we had "known" from Roman Christianity up to now concerning "Jesus" and "the Christ" was most likely wrong. That is simply because when we discover from study of these archeological finds and see for ourselves that the First New Testament written and given to us by the earliest Gnostic Christians like Marcion and Paul did not teach a "human Jesus Christ" but rather an allegorical and symbolic "Christ" as the Logos within each of God's children. This explains why there were no genealogies, birth or infancy narratives, or the 4 traditional Gospels in the earliest Gnostic Gospels. It is this "allegorical Christ" and "allegorical Joshua-Jesus Christ" [pattern] that the earliest New Testament and the authentic Pauline epistles taught but few know this today since Rome's efforts to destroy all of this literature as well as murder the Gnostics until few remained to safeguard this Revelation which can be traced to the beginning of mankind. In this website I reveal these truths concerning the "allegorical Christ" of the earliest Christians. Along with this we tackle the difficult problem of Christian forgeries of later Pauline Epistles and Gospels in their attempt to create a "historical Jesus" and a "historical Christ" in order to mimic their Godman-Emperor. This information goes a long way not only in explaining the lack of credible and unforged evidences of a historical Jesus but show how a Second New Testament was latter forged in Paul's name, who was long dead, along with the names of long dead Apostles in Rome's attempt to **place a historical Jesus within an appropriate timeline.** By comparison of what was written and contained within the First New Testament with what was later written later by Irenaeus and others in Rome's attempt to refute the Gnostic Christ and the Gnostic Joshua-Jesus we can easily now come to terms with this creative theology of Rome which was little more than a synthesis of "literalized" Sun Worship as exposed on our other sites. What should strike you as you study these materials is that the concept of the "Logos" and the "allegorical Christ" goes all



the way back to the beginning of mankind where God gave Revelation of Himself and His plan to the Ancient Egyptians who first wrote of the Karast/Christ.)

## SOD

The 4th and final level of understanding the Scriptures is called in Hebrew "Sod" meaning "hidden". **It is here that I reveal the hidden links to Egypt and Astronomy which they "allegorized" to capture for all time the Divine Concepts that they witnessed written in the sky and Heavens above them.** God, writing on the blackboard of the sky and Heavens, expressed to these Ancients sages and Priest eternal principles that were later captured in "myths" and "legends" to preserve for all time these Godly truths that would last through all time and yet today survive in spite of the destruction of Egypt by Alexander the Great and later Rome. These Laws of the Cosmos were expressed in allegorical myths that were reaffirmed by the same Laws witnessed operating in Nature. Ancient man, understanding that these same Laws operated within himself and his body saw therefore that "he was created in the image of God "; the image he witnessed operating above and around him when noticing the same Laws and Cycles in the Heavens and in Nature operating within his physical body as well. This is truly beautiful when you see it as it brought tears to my eyes to see and comprehend Gods' earliest message to me and you that has not been changed or adulterated by the agendas of men down through history. It is so simple when you see it. That is the way God intended it to be in the beginning but we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel today with our highly developed and evolved theologies down through Christian history.

It has been a hard and long process for me to accomplish but my task is about through when I complete this **last website on the "Mythical Jesus Christ" as seen in the stars.**

Now it is time to devote this website to the comprehensive understanding of the **"Mythical Christ"**. In so doing we will prove that the "Jesus Story" is actually an allegory for the path of the Sun "personified" as it travels through the 12 Houses of the Zodiac and through the 4 seasons of the years (the Spring Equinox, the Summer Solstice, the Autumn Equinox, and the Winter Solstice). You will come to see that this is the oldest and most important story humans ever knew as it also is full of Divine Truths that are to be understood "allegorically" and not "literally" as we have erroneously been taught today by a literalized Christianity of Rome's making. We owe a great debt to Ancient Egyptians and their great wisdom and their foresight in preserving for the the world this earliest understanding of God.

### • **THE EGYPTIAN RELIGION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

- <http://www.egyptcx.netfirms.com>
- We have all heard that "all roads lead to Rome" but in reality all roads lead to Egypt. This is especially true when one studies Christianity and Judaism and finds that these sister-faiths are nothing more than evolutionary developments of the Egyptian Religion. Understand from the beginning that Judaism is a much more faithful picture of this Planet's original understanding of the Divine than Christianity. Judaism comes in a close second. As a Pastor I am amazed where my studies have taken me and the things I have learned over these last twenty years in my pursuit of Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith. Never did I expect to find what I have uncovered and consider myself fortunate to live in an age where archeology and other such disciplines are giving back to mankind what Rome destroyed, covered up, and took from us over the last two thousand years. The study of error is often a little less important than the study of truth. The history of the human mind, in its progress from ignorance towards knowledge should tell us the mistakes into which it has sometimes wandered, as well as its steps in the right path. This is the goal of this website: to re-examine Gentile Christianity as to its earliest roots and determine if what is considered "Christian orthodoxy" today is a faithful representation of the earliest understanding of God by the Ancients since it is they who coined the religious concepts which we are told that we adhere to today in the primarily Christian Western Hemisphere.
- There is much to say about the knowledge contained in this Website but let me be brief. This website will reveal to you how the Ancients understood the message of God and His revelation to



them from their critical observations about the Heavens and the sky as well as Nature. The Egyptians Priests and scholars understood that God was revealing His Laws and intentions in the operations of the Divine Laws that governed the Cosmos. These Ancients holy men saw that these same Laws operated within their own bodies as well and that they were "created in the image of God" as what God was doing "above them" and "around them" He also was doing "within them". These Ancients sought out God and His way like no other nation has ever done on the face of the earth and tragically this knowledge was lost to us until only recently with the discoveries of archeology. We must understand that when allegory, metaphor, simile, and myth which expressed both the identity and actions of the Creator as understood by the Ancients in grasping for understanding of God and His workings in the Cosmos, was altered and stripped of its symbolism and rendered for all time as if "literal" by those who will come later through "conquest" and destroy Egypt and their understanding of God, then not only is Divine Truth lost forever but it plunges its recipients into abject idolatry. Such is the plight of the primarily Christian Western Hemisphere as these allegories and metaphors that once expressed Divine Truth were altered by Rome and "literalized" and applied to men's lives; in this case Jesus. If you have been diligent to study the website referenced just above this one then you saw for yourself this tragic loss of Divine Truth by Rome's "literalization" of such Egyptian Ancient truths concerning the "Logos" and "the Christ".

- **ASTROTHEROLOGY AND THE "JESUS STORY" OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: DOES IT ORIGINATE WITH THE STARS?**

- <http://jesusaastrotheology.netfirms.com>
- ***This website is presently under construction.*** This will be the last website for Bet Emet Ministries and in so doing we will go where few have gone. In this website we will show beyond any doubt from Astronomical examples of the Sun, Moon, Stars, and Constellations, that the Ancients preserved what they witnessed in the stars and Heavens seen in the cycles, patterns and paths and movements of these Heavenly orbs in "allegories" and in "myths" and "legends" not only concerning physical movements of these Celestial orbs as taken from their observations but expressed within these "solar myths" and "lunar myths" deeper Divine Truths of a Mystical Nature. These hidden deeper Divine Revelations from God to mankind dealing with the Spiritual Nature of mankind and his expected Spiritual maturation were again saved for all time through the agency of Myth which was never to be interpreted "literally" but rather were to function as "allegories" and "symbols" only that were but vehicles for transmission of higher truths from God. From these celestial patterns the Ancients extrapolated the Laws, Ordinances, Commandments, and Covenants of the Creator and gave them to mankind as a "blueprint" for our existence. These myths held the message of God to mankind. Later these myths were told through lives of personified man-gods like Osiris, Dionysus, Attis, Amon, Mithra, and Jesus. Since we include Jesus in the same sentence with other astral myths then this will be a hard study for as you examine the evidence presented you will see without a doubt that an unbiased study of History shows that there is not a shred of legitimate historical evidence anywhere that the "Jesus Story" originated as the biography of a real historical man named Jesus. In fact the evidence, or should I say the lack of it, and the forgery of all that does exist outside this one New Testament, is hard to deny and makes a belief in a historical Jesus almost impossible when knowing from the above studies the hundreds of forgeries in the religious texts of the Christian Bible. Nowhere outside of this one forged book by Rome can we find this "historical Jesus". As if that was not enough an unbiased and through study of Comparative Religion reveals to the reader as seen in the above studies and sites that the basic plot of the "Jesus Story", from beginning to end, including the motif of a crucified savior, already existed in many other religions thousands of years prior to the alleged time of Jesus and if you continue such dedicated studies into Astronomy and Solar Mythology you will find that beyond any doubt the "Jesus Story" is nothing more than an allegory for what would naturally be the oldest and most important story humans would notice and write down, that of the annual passage of the seasons of the year and the path of the Sun through the celestial sphere and the 12 Houses of the Zodiac during the year. What is most startling is when you see for yourself that the personification of the Sun and its path through the sky as found in the story of ancient solar and lunar gods follow in chronological procession through the



year the exact chronology of the "Jesus Story" when personified from Matthew chapter 1 through then end of the book. The Synoptic gospels follow the path of the Sun in its travels through the sky from beginning to end. Most may have no idea of what I am saying I can only tell you to hold on and read the articles on this site and you will quickly come to see of what I spoke. Let it be said when you see this and that all the other "Jesus Stories" are but Ancient allegories of the Heavens and the Sun and its path through the Zodiac which was later "literalized" then without a doubt there is no more room for idolatry connected with any Jesus of any kind. Then we can follow in the footsteps of Moses and quit worshipping a false "god-man" and return to worshipping our Creator in Spirit and in Truth. You come to see that the "Jesus Story" is nothing but a retelling of the "Osiris Story" and the "Horus Story". It is from these two Ancient Egyptian stories that all other "saviors" have come.

Orthodox Christians, since they are committed to a belief in the literal truth of the Bible, hold that after the flood men became even more evil than they were before, so that 4,000 years after the creation of the world, god sent his only begotten son to suffer and die for the salvation of the human race. **This ministry of Jesus, the Christ, was supposed to be a unique event in human history but as we show it is anything but that. This opinion is no longer tenable among those who accept reason as the criterion of truth.**

**If you are diligent to study and read these websites then you have it all.** There is little that exists that is not covered in one way or the other or has somehow escaped my attention over these almost 20 years of study. There is nothing I would trade for my years of study and the truths that I have gathered and although it has been challenging to my very core I fully am aware that because of such serious studies my walk with God, the true God, is closer than ever. It is truly well with my soul because **"I KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM SEPARATED FROM ALL THE FICTION"** that men have written down through history to promote their own religion and political agendas.

So we began our study with the question:

**Matt 16:13 13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (KJV)**

**Now you have you answers! ?The rest is up to you to study to show yourselves approved..needing not be ashamed when you meet this Creator face to face when you cross your Nile/Jordan...(the same)**

## IN CLOSING

As stated earlier we begin our study with Bet Emet Websites with a "historical" assumption and present studies to show the beauty of Judaism over the dishonesty in Christian theological dogma and do so by using the depiction of the New Testament Jesus as if "historical" because he provides a vehicle for the teaching of Jewish theology, monotheism, morals, values, ethics, etc. It is not my purpose to reveal the weaknesses behind such a historical presentation of Jesus at this time as it will be developed and proven at a later time as one's studies progress through the Mystical Jesus and the Mythical Jesus as detailed on the above websites.

Of concern for us of course is the "Jesus Story" as depicted in the New Testament and its reliability as understood "literally" since it is being taught as a literal truth today about a historical man who lived 2000 years ago. You will come to see in time as you study that the Ancients as far back as Egypt understood this "Karast/Christ" entirely different from how we have been taught today under the direction of Roman and Protestant Christianity. Here are some big questions for you to ponder in light that most Christians trust in this Jesus Christ for their Eternal Salvation.

- **Answer for yourself:** Who or what is truly behind the name "Jesus Christ"? Can it be proven that the "Jesus Story" is nothing but the personification of the Sun and its passage through the various houses of the Zodiac as it passes through the 4 seasons and the equinoxes and solstices? If so then what do you do

now?

- **Answer for yourself:** Are the infancy narratives and later depictions of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in the New Testament nothing more than solar stories told as allegories which were later "literalized" and subsequently written into Rome's New Testament and depicted as a literalized historical Jesus Christ when in fact they were understood by the Ancients as astrological myths taken from astronomy?
- **Answer for yourself:** Did Rome destroy the Gnostic Christ of the earliest "Christians" which had existed since the beginning of time over the first 5 centuries of the early Church and replace it one of their own making? What are you to do when you see this from your studies on our Websites?
- **Answer for yourself:** If I study the Websites and find that the "Jesus Story" follows chronologically the Gospel of Matthew from chapter one through the end of chapter 28 and see for myself that the "Jesus Story" presented there parallels identically the personification of the Sun in its path through the Zodiac then what should this mean to me regarding my belief in Jesus as the historical Christ and him being the Jewish Messiah?
- **Answer for yourself:** Have we as Christians and followers of the "the Christ" been deceived by Rome and spent a good part of our lives worshipping a man as God as Rome has declared in their New Testament since the Nicean Council (325 A.D.) when in fact we should have been worshipping the one true Creator as the Pharaoh Moses (Akhenaton) instructed when he stood up to the religious establishment of Egypt **when some** were straying from the truth in their worship of the "godman" similarity to what we have done today with Rome's historical Jesus? Are we guilty of idolatry as Christians because we have believed a fable no more real than Snow White and the seven dwarfs?

Well the following studies in the above websites is not for the weak of heart as I will present over and over again infallible proofs that the "Jesus Story" as depicted in the New Testament is but a hoax perpetrated upon us by Rome in their hatred of the Jewish faith and Jewish Gnosticism back in the first century. You will see, in the last website depicting the Mythical Christ, as we move chronologically from one sign of the Zodiac to the other, from month to month, from season to season, from Spring equinox to Summer solstice, from Autumn equinox to Winter solstice, and repeating again this cycle, along with the study of selected events from the depiction of the life of Jesus in Rome's New Testament, that if you study with us and finish the studies on this website, that the "Jesus Story" as depicted in the New Testament is nothing more than the literalization by Rome of the path of the Sun through the Zodiac along with other solar myths later incorporated into their "Jesus Story" as later literalized by Rome as well. In so doing you will see as I and many others have that we have not been taught the truth about "the Christ within" and how He is so integral to the proper worship of the Invisible God as Egypt and Moses taught. It would seem that Egypt got it right in the beginning but thanks to Hellenism and Romanism we lost these earliest and correct understanding of Divine Concepts witnessed in God's Heaven and Nature. In a way these were our classroom and where we were to be instructed by the Creator about our life and purpose in God's creation. We are truly blessed today to live in an age where archeology and the information age can bring these truths back to life for you and me.

As a "retired Pastor", and moved by what my studies revealed over the years, I feel moved to share this information and evidence from such studies with those interested in the truth behind the origin for "Jesus Story" which is taught to the world today as a historical reality when in fact it is not. In the websites that are delineated above such evidence is presented to the reader in hopes that the missing puzzle pieces concerning the "Jesus Story" will be plainly evident to him and he can, in the light of such knowledge, no longer be deceived by the astrological allegory of "the Christ" as found in the New Testament which is erroneously taught "literally" today. I make very few promises to our readers but I make this one now: If you do these studies, and read these articles on this website then you will be thoroughly convinced as I was that the "Jesus Story" was never meant to be understood "literally" as it has been taught to you and me. **Thus the worship of Jesus as a historical person or connecting this assumed historical person with God or believing him to be God is the most vulgar idolatry according to Moses and the Ten Commandments and a terrible affront to the Creator and constitutes blasphemy of the Name of God.**

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## ORDER OF EVENTS IN THE MESSIANIC ERA

**Answer for yourself:** In spite of the failure of the Messianic prophecies to be fulfilled Christianity continually teaches that the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus/Yeshua. The Jewish people today do not recognize Yeshua as Messiah because of this failure of the Messianic prophecies to be fulfilled. Who is right?

The following is taken from Faith Strengthened by Isaac Troki, from pp32-38, and are paraphrased by me for the most part. These are signs that signal the coming of Messiah. When these things occur and are visible for all to see then and only then look up for your redemption draws nigh. You be the judge if these things occurred or were accomplished by Jesus during his earthly ministry or has happened since.

- The ingathering of the Ten Tribes, and their union with Judah and Benjamin under the dominion of one king of the house of Judah (see Ezek. 37:16-22)
- The rise of Gog from Magog [Magog = from Gog], and their incursions into the territory of Israel (Ezek 38 and 39, also Zech 14:12)...
- The Mount of Olives shall be rent asunder (see Zech 14:4), "And his feet shall stand on that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, and the mount of Olives shall be rent asunder in the midst of the east and the west, so as to become a very extended valley"
- The river of Egypt dry up, and the Euphrates divided into 7 wadis, so that the exiles can cross them dry-shod prior to the gathering of the exiles of Judah (see Isaiah 11:15,16).
- Ezekiel 47 "...The waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward.... And by the river shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, nor the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruit according to his month. Because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." See Zechariah 14:8, "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer and in winter shall it be." Joel 4:18, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters [many of the rivers of Judah are dry wadis, that flow only on occasion when there is a lot of rain]; and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the L-rd, and shall water the valley of Sheetim."
- The fulfillment of Zech. 8:23 "They (the Gentile nations) will say (to the Jews), we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."



- The annual pilgrimage of the remnant [after the war of Gog] of all nations to Jerusalem "to bow down to ... the L-rd of Hosts," etc. see Zech 14:17
- The celebration of Shabbat, and the new moons by all the Gentiles.
- The total extinction of idolatry. See Isaiah 2:18, "And the idol he will consume completely;"
- Unity of faith shall prevail throughout the world. See Isaiah 45:23. "I have sworn by myself, a word of righteousness is gone out of my mouth, and shall not be reversed, That to me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Zech 14:9, "And the L-rd shall be a King over the whole earth; on that day shall the L-rd be one and His name one" ["i.e. the L-rd alone shall be worshipped and shall be invoked by His true name."--note from JPS Tanakh]

There are 10 more events to occur. This is only half of the list. **NONE of them have occurred, so the messiah has not yet come in the opinion of the Jews, and let us remember it was to them he was promised. They, of all people, should know what to expect.** If Yeshua is the Messiah these events were not accomplished by him or his followers following his recorded resurrection. They yet await fulfillment. Yet you will come to find as you study that there are reasons why these prophecies were not fulfilled in the first century and the fault cannot be laid at the feet of Yeshua/Jesus or any "messiah." The problem is that Israel did not merit the Kingdom nor her King.

**To those who say a second coming provides the platform for such fulfillments need look into what prompted the origin of such a teaching of a "second coming." After finding out that the original teaching of a "second coming" applied to the Essenes' Teacher of Righteousness originally, then we are hard pressed to say that such a teaching was a Divine revelation concerning Jesus but was only applied to him later by those who expected their "teacher" to have returned in light of the very bad conditions imposed upon them by Rome that they found unbearable. Any deliverer at that time would do and to bolster hopes of a very oppressed people the people kept alive such hope by postponing the deliverance and positioning it in the future.**

But yet not knowing the future only time will tell concerning the revelation of Israel's Messiah, but to say that Yeshua is "the" Messiah, when these Messianic events go lacking, is a belief and decision based more upon emotion than examination of the facts and fulfilled Jewish prophecy. One finds the reason for such a declaration out of emotion only as the facts of history and the Jewish Bible do not lend support to such a belief...at least not at this time. There is a big difference between a religious belief based upon "facts" and "emotion." David Flusser, a very well known Jewish scholar today, says it best when asked if he thinks Jesus is the Messiah: "I will approach him and ask: 'been here before?'" In other words, "are you the Yeshua of history?" Time will tell will it not? It is time to study for yourself what constitutes the salvation promised by God and when you do you will find out that it **NEVER** contained a belief in the Messiah in order to make it to the world to come. Therefore these false doctrines as written in the New Testament that make salvation based on "this belief" or "that belief" concerning the Messiah, let alone Jesus, are consistently shown to be false when one compares the salvation messages of the whole of the Jewish Bible as given by a God who changes not. Shalom.

Blessings....



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# WHY DO THE GOSPELS CONFLICT CONCERNING WHERE JESUS WAS BORN?

**Answer for yourself:** Was Yeshua from Bethlehem or Nazareth?

**Answer for yourself:** Were you aware that the Gospels conflict with each other in this regard?

## Matt 1:1-2:23

- 1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;
- 3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;
- 4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;
- 5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;
- 6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;
- 7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;
- 8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;
- 9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;
- 10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;
- 11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:
- 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;
- 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;
- 14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;
- 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;
- 16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.
- 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.
- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
- 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.
- 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.
- 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.
- 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
- 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, G-d with us.
- 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him



his wife:

- 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Yeshua

## CHAPTER 2

- **1 Now when Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judaea** in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
- 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
- 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
- 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,
- 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.
- 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.
- 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.
- 9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.
- 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.
- 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.
- 12 And being warned of G-d in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.
- 13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, **Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt**, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
- 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:
- 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.
- 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.
- 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,
- 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.
- 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,
- 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.
- 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.
- 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, **being warned of G-d in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:**
- **23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth:** that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

We all heard the story before. **Matthew tells us that Yeshua was born in Bethlehem.** After he is born King Herod heard of the birth of this Jewish-would-be Messiah, and to get away, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt because Herod is seeking to kill the baby. Once Herod is dead his son takes the throne (Archelaus) and the angel tells Joseph he can return to Israel (Bethlehem). Yet in verse 22 he returns to other than Bethlehem. He

goes not to Judea but to Galilee. He goes to Nazareth.

**Answer for yourself:** Why does the writer of the Gospel of Matthew write that Joseph returns to Nazareth?

Matthew would have us believe that such a return to Nazareth is a fulfillment of prophecy.

Matthew states in chapter 2:23 that "he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that is might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

**Answer for yourself:** Is this really a fulfillment of prophecy?

In the footnotes in your Bible the book of Judges 13:5 is given as a reference for "He shall be called a Nazarene." If you look up the reference for yourself you will see that the original intention of the writer of the book of Judges was to prophecy of the birth of Sampson. The divinely promised child was to be a Nazarite, one separated from the world and consecrated to the Lord. Obviously the writer of the book of Matthew, who we are supposed to believe was a Jew and a follower of Yeshua, confused these two "n" words.....Nazareth a city and Nazarite a separated individual who removed from himself the use of wine and also refrained from touching a dead body or cutting his hair. The reference to Nazarite has absolutely nothing to do with a city. Again we are led astray by the writer of the Gospel of Matthew.

**Answer for yourself:** Can we say that the Holy Spirit anointed the writer to make such an error? Can you possibly think of any scenario whereby a Jew, if he wrote this, could possibly get this wrong?

Being called a Nazarene and being a Nazarite have nothing in common at all. Needless to say the prophets spoke of Nazarites but never prophesied that Yeshua or the Messiah were to be called Nazarenes. It is hard for me to conceive how a Jew, if he was the writer, let alone commissioned by the Holy Spirit to write, could make such a mistake in these two concepts.

*There is no prophecy recorded anywhere in the Jewish Scriptures where the Messiah or Yeshua was to be called a Nazarene.*

## LUKE HAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STORY...WHY?

To Further Complicate Things We Find That Luke Paints A Completely Different And Conflicting Story

Luke 2:1-39

- 1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
- 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
- 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
- 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
- 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
- 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
- 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.
- 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
- 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.



- 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
- 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
- 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
- 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising G-d, and saying,
- 14 Glory to G-d in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
- 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
- 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
- 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
- 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
- 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
- 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising G-d for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.
- 21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
- 22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
- 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
- 24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.
- 25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
- 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
- 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
- 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed G-d, and said,
- 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
- 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
- 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
- 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
- 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
- 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
- 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
- 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
- 37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served G-d with fastings and prayers night and day.
- 38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
- 39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

**If we can believe Luke we find that Mary and Joseph was not living in Bethlehem as Matthew had said but in Nazareth (their home town). Mary was pregnant in Nazareth.** According to Christian theology the Messiah has to be born in Bethlehem (in a previous article we saw that this is not necessarily so). But make

no mistake about it Luke has Joseph and Mary living in Nazareth. Luke contrives an incredible scenario. There was a census for taxation purposes taken during the year Yeshua was a baby. We know for a fact that this census occurred in 6 A.D. yet Matthew has Yeshua being born in 4 B.C.E. in the year that Herod dies. That would make Yeshua a 10 year old "baby." Something is desperately wrong with these "inerrant and infallible passages in the New Testament."

That is another problem for another day. The rules of the census was that you have to be counted in the city you were born. This was never the Roman custom. If we think about this just for a second this is entirely off the wall and the difficulties would be enormous. Besides this the whole idea is stupid for the whole purpose of the census is to tax them where they make their money and that would be in the city in which they lived and worked (not the city of their birth). Who cares where a family came from? Besides this, there is no historical evidence that this was the custom back then.

Luke has to get Yeshua and his family from Nazareth to Bethlehem to agree with the Christian tradition that the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem. As shown in the prior article this "understanding" comes from a total lack of understanding of Micah and no Jew would make such a mistake, let alone under the anointing of G-d no less. In v 4 Luke records that Joseph goes up to Judea from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to register at the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was of the house of David by descent, and with him went Mary who was betrothed to him. The baby is born in the right city thanks to the help of Luke. They stayed in Bethlehem until after Mary's purification (v22) in accordance with the Law and only then did they bring Yeshua to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Next they returned to Nazareth.

## THERE ARE SEVERAL PROBLEMS MOST HAVE NEVER NOTICED:

1. What is their home town.....Bethlehem as Matthew says or Nazareth as Luke says?
2. In the book of Matthew just as the baby is born they have to flee to Egypt, but Luke omits the trip to Egypt. Luke has them going from Nazareth to Bethlehem, from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Nazareth. There is no mention of any trip to Egypt.

*What we have here is two garbled stories.*

## JESUS OF BETHLEHEM OR JESUS OF NAZARETH?

**Answer for yourself:** What is Yeshua called through out the NT?

Yeshua of Nazareth. Yeshua is never called "Yeshua of Bethlehem" which he would have been if the writer of Matthew was correct as well as if others alive at the time knew for certain he had come from Bethlehem.

There seems to be a lack of clarity about where Yeshua was from.

John 1:44-46

- 44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
- 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.
- 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. (KJV)

People who came from Galilee were looked upon in the first century stupid people. "Can any good thing come



out of Galilee” was a saying common in the first century. You see the Jews knew what the Christians don't. The Messiah can come from any city. He need not be restricted to Bethlehem. But the Messiah will come from one (David) who came from Bethlehem. So Yeshua coming from Nazareth was not meant to be a disqualification. It was only doubted that someone as important as the Messiah would come from such a common and humble beginning. Now you know the truth!

John 7:41-43

- 41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?
- 42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?
- 43 So there was a division among the people because of him. (KJV)

There was division among the people if Yeshua could be the messiah because he came from the wrong town. So without a doubt we see that those alive at the time knew of Yeshua's ancestry and were full aware that somewhere other than Bethlehem was know to be Yeshua's place of birth. But we would only have known that if we looked at the Gospel very closely as we have in this article. Shalom.



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# THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS

(adapted from the Apostolic Fathers by J. Lightfoot)

**0:1 Polycarp and the presbyters that are with him unto the Church of God which sojourneth at Philippi; 0:2 mercy unto you and peace from God Almighty and Jesus Christ our Saviour be multiplied.**

**1:1 I rejoiced with you greatly in our Lord Jesus Christ, for that ye received the followers of the true Love and escorted them on their way, as befitted you--those men encircled in saintly bonds which are the diadems of them that be truly chosen of God and our Lord; 1:2 and that the stedfast root of your faith which was famed from primitive times abideth until now and beareth fruit unto our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured to face even death for our sins, {whom God raised, having loosed the pangs of Hades; 1:3 on whom, though ye saw Him not, ye believe with joy unutterable and full of glory;} 1:4 unto which joy many desire to enter in; 1:5 forasmuch as ye know that it is {by grace ye are saved, not of works,} but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.**

**2:1 {Wherefore gird up your loins and serve God in fear} and truth, forsaking the vain and empty talking and the error of the many, {for that ye have believed on Him that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave unto Him glory} and a throne on His right hand; 2:2 unto whom all things were made subject that are in heaven and that are on the earth; 2:3 to whom every creature that hath breath doeth service; 2:4 who cometh as {judge of quick and dead;} 2:5 whose blood God will require of them that are disobedient unto Him. 2:6 Now {He that raised Him} from the dead {will raise us also;} 2:7 if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; 2:8 {not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing} or blow for blow or cursing for cursing; 2:9 but remembering the words which the Lord spake as He taught; 2:10 {Judge not that ye be not judged. 2:11 Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you. 2:12 Have mercy that ye may receive mercy. 2:13 With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;} 2:14 and again {Blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.}**

**3:1 These things, brethren, I write unto you concerning righteousness, not because I laid this charge upon myself, but because ye invited me. 3:2 For neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he came among you taught face to face with the men of that day the word which concerneth truth carefully and surely; 3:3 who also, when he was absent, wrote a letter unto you, into the which if ye look diligently, ye shall be able to be builded up unto the faith given to you, {which is the mother of us all,} while hope followeth after and love goeth before--love toward God and Christ and toward our neighbour. 3:4 For if any man be occupied with these, he hath fulfilled the commandment of righteousness; 3:5 for he that hath love is far from all sin.**

**4:1 {But the love of money is the beginning of all troubles.} 4:2 Knowing therefore that {we brought nothing into the world neither can we carry anything out,} let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness, and let us teach ourselves first to walk in the commandment of the Lord; 4:3 and then our wives also, to walk in the faith that hath been given unto them and in love and purity, cherishing their own husbands in all truth and**



loving all men equally in all chastity, and to train their children in the training of the fear of God. 4:4 Our widows must be sober-minded as touching the faith of the Lord, making intercession without ceasing for all men, abstaining from all calumny, evil speaking, false witness, love of money, and every evil thing, knowing that they are God's altar, and that all sacrifices are carefully inspected, and nothing escapeth Him either of their thoughts or intents or any of the secret things of the heart.

5:1 Knowing then that {God is not mocked,} we ought to walk worthily of Him commandment and His glory. 5:2 In like manner deacons should be blameless in the presence of His righteousness, as deacons of God and Christ and not of men; 5:3 not calumniators, not double-tongued, not lovers of money, temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord who became {a minister (deacon) of all.} 5:4 For if we be well pleasing unto Him in this present world, we shall receive the future world also, according as He promised us to raise us from the dead, and that if we conduct ourselves worthily of Him {we shall also reign with Him,} if indeed we have faith. 5:5 In like manner also the younger men must be blameless in all things, caring for purity before everything and curbing themselves from every evil. 5:6 For it is a good thing to refrain from lusts in the world, for every {lust warreth against the Spirit,} and {neither whoremongers nor effeminate persons nor defilers of themselves with men shall inherit the kingdom of God,} neither they that do untoward things. 5:7 Wherefore it is right to abstain from all these things, submitting yourselves to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ. 5:8 The virgins must walk in a blameless and pure conscience.

6:1 And the presbyters also must be compassionate, merciful towards all men, {turning back the sheep that are gone astray,} visiting all the infirm, not neglecting a widow or an orphan or a poor man: 6:2 but {providing always for that which is honorable in the sight of God and of men,} abstaining from all anger, respect of persons, unrighteous judgment, being far from all love of money, not quick to believe anything against any man, not hasty in judgment, knowing that we all are debtors of sin. 6:3 If then we entreat the Lord that He would forgive us, we also ought to forgive: 6:4 for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and we must {all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ,} and {each man must give an account of himself.} 6:5 Let us therefore so serve Him with fear and all reverence, as He himself gave commandment and the Apostles who preached the Gospel to us and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of our Lord; 6:6 being zealous as touching that which is good, abstaining from offences and from the false brethren and from them that bear the name of the Lord in hypocrisy, who lead foolish men astray.

**7:1 For every one {who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist:}** 7:2 and whosoever shall not confess the testimony of the Cross, is of the devil; 7:3 and whosoever shall pervert the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts and say that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, that man is the first-born of Satan. 7:4 Wherefore let us forsake the vain doing of the many and their false teachings, and turn unto the word which was delivered unto us from the beginning, {being sober unto prayer} and constant in fastings, entreating the all-seeing God with supplications that He {bring us not into temptation,} according as the Lord said, {The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.}

8:1 Let us therefore without ceasing hold fast by our hope and by the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ who {took up our sins in His own body upon the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,} but for our sakes He endured all things, that we might live in Him. 8:2 Let us therefore become imitators of His endurance; 8:3 and if we should suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. 8:4 For He gave this example to us in His own person, and we believed this.

9:1 I exhort you all therefore to be obedient unto the word of righteousness and to practise all endurance, which also ye saw with your own eyes in the blessed Ignatius and Zosimus and Rufus, yea and in others also who came from among yourselves, as well as in Paul himself and the rest of the Apostles; 9:2 being persuaded that all these {ran not in vain} but in faith and righteousness, and that they are in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. 9:3 For they {loved not the present world,} but Him that died for our sakes and was raised by God for us.

10:1 Stand fast therefore in these things and follow the example of the Lord, {being firm in the faith} and {immovable, in love of the brotherhood kindly affectioned one to another,} partners with the truth, {forestalling

one another} in the gentleness of the Lord, despising no man. 10:2 {When ye are able to do good,} defer it not, for {Pitifulness delivereth from death. 10:3 Be ye all subject one to another, having your conversation} unblameable {among the Gentiles, that from your good works} both ye may receive praise and the Lord may not be blasphemed in you. 10:4 But {woe to him through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed.} 10:5 Therefore teach all men soberness, in which ye yourselves also walk.

11:1 I was exceedingly grieved for Valens, who aforetime was a presbyter among you, because he is so ignorant of the office which was given unto him. 11:2 I warn you therefore that ye refrain from covetousness, and that ye be pure and truthful. 11:3 Refrain from all evil. 11:4 But he who cannot govern himself in these things, how doth he enjoin this upon another? If a man refrain not from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the Gentiles who {know not the judgment of the Lord. 11:5 Nay, know we not, that the saints shall judge the world,} as Paul teacheth? But I have not found any such thing in you, neither have heard thereof, among whom the blessed Paul laboured, who were his {letters} in the beginning. 11:6 For {he boasteth of you in} all those {churches} which alone at that time knew God; 11:7 for we knew Him not as yet. 11:8 Therefore I am exceedingly grieved for him and for his wife, unto whom may the Lord grant true repentance. 11:9 Be ye therefore yourselves also sober herein, and {hold not such as enemies,} but restore them as frail and erring members, that ye may save the whole body of you. 11:10 For so doing, ye do edify one another.

12:1 For I am persuaded that ye are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. 12:2 But to myself this is not granted. 12:3 Only, as it is said in these scriptures, {Be ye angry and sin not,} and {Let not the sun set on your wrath.} 12:4 Blessed is he that remembereth this; 12:5 and I trust that this is in you. 12:6 Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal High-priest Himself, the [Son of] God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness and in all avoidance of wrath and in forbearance and long suffering and in patient endurance and in purity; 12:7 and may He grant unto you a lot and portion among His saints, and to us with you, and to all that are under heaven, who shall believe on our Lord and God Jesus Christ and on His Father {that raised Him from the dead. 12:8 Pray for all the saints.} 12:9 Pray also {for kings} and powers and princes, and {for them that persecute} and hat {you,} and for {the enemies of the cross,} that your fruit may be {manifest among all men,} that ye may be perfect in Him.

13:1 Ye wrote to me, both ye yourselves and Ignatius, asking that if any one should go to Syria he might carry thither the letters from you. 13:2 And this I will do, if I get a fit opportunity, either I myself, or he whom I shall send to be ambassador on your behalf also. 13:3 The letters of Ignatius which were sent to us by him, and others as many as we had by us, we send unto you, according as ye gave charge; 13:4 the which are subjoined to this letter; 13:5 from which ye will be able to gain great advantage. 13:6 For they comprise faith and endurance and every kind of edification, which pertaineth unto our Lord. 13:7 Moreover concerning Ignatius himself and those that were with him, if ye have any sure tidings, certify us.

14:1 I write these things to you by Crescens, whom I commended to you recently and now commend unto you: 14:2 for he hath walked blamelessly with us; 14:3 and I believe also with you in like manner. 14:4 But ye shall have his sister commended, when she shall come to you. 14:5 Fare ye well in the Lord Jesus Christ in grace, ye and all yours. Amen.

**Answer for yourself:** What should 7.1 teach us? That at the time of this epistle these proto-literlists were fighting an uphill battle against Gnostics who did not believe "the Christ" had come in "the flesh". This tells us that at this time period the majority of Christians were Gnostics and did not believe in a "fleshy Christ Jesus".





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*Rom 6:11-18 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (KJV)*

*Col 3:1-4:18 CHAPTER 3 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no*

*respect of persons.*

*CHAPTER 4 1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. 2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man....*





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# THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING THE LAWS OF GOD

For many reasons, there has been confusion among the saints concerning the laws of the Almighty God. Well-meaning people have been deceived and misled by denominations, preachers, priests and teachers. **As the result, there are all sorts of wrong conclusions, misunderstandings, and widespread errors in the assemblies and denominations concerning the laws of the Eternal Father.**

Within the Gentile Christian Church, beginning many centuries ago, erroneous beliefs concerning "the law" were introduced. As a result, church-goers with excellent intentions have been cheated of sound understanding concerning the laws of God. In the present day, most who call themselves Christians give little or no thought to "the law" that is so often mentioned within the scriptures. Those scriptural passages that equate "the elect" with those who "keep the commandments of God" are generally read without any understanding, by the majority of people. As if that is sad enough, through false teachings and outright error being taught from our pulpits most people have had ingrained within them a "negative" connotation concerning the laws of God and pride themselves no "being under those awful things that kill."

**Answer for yourself:** It is possible, that due to anti-Semitism and improper teaching beginning over 1800 years ago by the Gentile Church which has rejected their "Jewish Mother" that we could be misled today in our understanding of the laws of God...His Torah (instruction)? This matter will be examined in this series of articles.

## KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE FATHER

**Answer for yourself:** Why is it that the scriptures are filled with often repeated instructions to "keep My commandments," yet the average church-goer is unable to tell you or list what even 50 of the 613 commandments are?

***Yeshua very plainly stated that in order to inherit a place in the Heavenly Kingdom, we must do much more than merely call him our Lord. As it is written, he said that a person must also "do the will of [the] Father"(Matthew 7:21).***

**Answer for yourself:** How can anyone read that passage (and others like it), with the intent of eventually reaching eternal Heavenly rest, without pausing to wonder, "just what is 'the will of the Father'?"

**Answer for yourself:** We must ask ourselves "Can we follow Jesus without being willing to keep the commandments of the Father?"

***When the young man asked Jesus what he must do in order to "have eternal life," Yeshua responded by telling him that in order to reach his spiritual goal he must "keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-17).***

**Answer for yourself:** Are we not compelled, then, to wonder which commandments?

**Answer for yourself:** Because of that answer which He gave to the sincere young individual, should we not wonder whether we are "keeping the commandments"?

Truly, all of us who are sincerely seeking a Heavenly home must ponder whether we are obeying the "will and commandments of the Father."

***"If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (John 15:10).***

**Answer for yourself:** When you read words such as these, how can you not wonder to which commandments he is referring?

***"And hereby we do know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby we know that we are in Him" (1 John 2:3-5).***

***"For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).***

We must know what God's commandments are, and we must make the decision to obey them, in order to be called His friends (John 15:14).

The end-times Church -- the assembly of the elect -- is described as those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17, 14:12). Those whom the end-time Messiah recognizes as outwardly displaying their love for him, "keep [God's] commandments." And those who will not be permitted to inherit a place within the Heavenly Kingdom are those who failed to obey the "will of the Father." All who profess to follow Jesus of Nazareth must be "keeping the commandments," else he or she will be rejected at the day of judgement. It is to those who do not keep the commandments that the New Testament records that Yeshua will say, ***"I never knew you. Depart from Me"*** (Matthew 7:23).

Obviously then, commandment-keeping is a basic part of Christ's doctrine. The words of Yeshua repeatedly declare that fact to us.

**Answer for yourself:** Since commandment keeping is of such importance to Jesus, if you are a follower of Jesus then should they also be as important to you?

**THERE IS A YOKE...MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT**

Contrary to what so many have misunderstood or have been misled into believing, there is a "yoke" of



commandments to which the believer must yield himself or herself. To be sure, the Father of our spirits is merciful, and gracious, and loving, and kind. However, none of those attributes is in any way opposite to requiring His children to obey His rules. Jesus told those who would follow him, **"Take My yoke upon you"** (**Matthew 11:29**). Yeshua never said, 'Do whatever you please, and I'll be satisfied.' In fact, he declared just the opposite!

**Answer for yourself:** Did Yeshua say that those who serve him in their way, instead of his way, will not be accepted by him at the Last Day (Matthew 7:21)? He sure did!

***Matt 7:21-23 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (KJV)***

I want to draw your attention to that part of the above verse where Yeshua mentions "depart from him because they practice iniquity" (Strong's number 458 & 459 meaning "the practice of not submitting to Jewish Law".

23 And <2532> then <5119> will I profess <3670> (5692) unto them <846>, <3754> I never <3763> knew <1097> (5627) you <5209>: depart <672> (5720) from <575> me <1700>, ye that work <2038> (5740) **iniquity** **<458>**.

Lexicon Greek 458 458 anomia {an-om-ee'-ah} from 459; TDNT - 4:1085,646; n f AV - iniquity 12, unrighteousness 1, transgress the law + 4060 1, transgression of the law 1; 15

- **1) the condition of without law**
  - **1a) because ignorant of it**
  - **1b) because of violating it**
- **2) contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness**

Now let us examine the "root" word.

Lexicon Greek 459 459 anomos {an'-om-os} from 1 (as a negative particle) and 3551; TDNT - 4:1086,646; adj AV - without law 4, transgressor 2, wicked 2, lawless 1, unlawful 1; 10

- **1) destitute of (the Mosaic) law**
- **1a) of the Gentiles (notice this carefully)!!!!!!**
- **2) departing from the law, a violator of the law, lawless, wicked**

**Answer for yourself:** Is transgression of the LAW of Moses for the Gentile (following the Cross in the New Testament) considered "sin?" **Definitely yes.**

- **Answer for yourself:** Did you know before now that **within the 613 Laws of Moses are contained the 66 Laws of Noah given to all Gentiles as their Covenant with God?**
- **Answer for yourself:** Please note that Ephesians 2:1 says that these Gentile converts "WERE" (past tense) cut off from Yahweh, having no hope because something had separated them for Yahweh. What does Isaiah tell us in 59:1-2 that separated the Gentiles from God? **our iniquities, our sin which is transgression of the Laws of Moses, which contained within them the Laws of Noah which were given by God to the non-Jew long before there were Jews.**
- **Answer for yourself:** The New Testament, in I John 3:4, defines "SIN" as what? Transgression of, violation of, and ignorance of the Mosaic Laws (including within them the Laws of Noah for all

Gentiles...see above).

- **Answer for yourself:** Does Matt. 7:21 teach us in the New Testament that those who are without the Law, or who are ignorant of the Law, or who violate the Law, or who are destitute of the Mosaic Law (usually Gentiles) are told by Yeshua to depart from him? Yes.
- **Answer for yourself:** Does Matt. 7:21 teach us in the New Testament that those who depart from the law are "wicked?" Yes.
- **Answer for yourself:** Does Matt. 7:21 teach us that if we are ignorant of the Law, thereby showing our contempt of it, should we expect to likewise hear "depart from me" from Yeshua in the world to come? Yes.
- **Answer for yourself:** Does Matt. 7:21 teach us in the New Testament that those who violate the Law and are destitute of the Mosaic Law are told by Yeshua to depart from him. Yes.
- **Answer for yourself:** If your church has taught you that the Law has passed away, thus making you destitute of the Law of Moses, should you expect that Yeshua will tell you to depart from him as well? Yes.

I hoped you thought the above questions very interesting and challenging. I can remember just how shocked I was when in my studies years ago I ran across this information when looking up hundreds and hundreds of words in the Greek from my New Testament. **Let is sink into your head and heart; the word in the Greek for "iniquity" means "those who are ignorant of, or disobedient of the Mosaic Laws (also the Laws of Noah for Gentiles), especially Gentiles!** I can hear now many of you saying to yourselves "No way", but the facts are facts. More on this important truth which is overlooked by so many later in other articles.

**Answer for yourself:** Are we not warned that those who substitute "the commandments of men" in place of the Father's doctrine "worship [Him] in vain" (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7)?

***Matt 15:8-9 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (KJV)***

***Mark 7:7 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (KJV)***

**Answer for yourself:** Have you worshipped God in vain at times in your life because you failed to understand God's Law which commanded the worship of God be done in certain ways and not in other ways (take the Festivals of the Old Testament for example which Christianity does not observe)?

Obviously, there are commandments for Christians to follow, and there is a "burden" that we are expected to bear. The scriptures soothe and assure us, however, that, ***"His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).*** Yeshua said that this ***"yoke is easy, and the burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).***

Those who are called the "saints" are they who ***"keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 12:17, 14:12).*** In Revelation 22:14, we read: ***"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates of the city [the Holy City descended from Heaven]."***

**Answer for yourself:** Can any one who features himself or herself to be a Christian actually think it is acceptable to by-pass such plain declarations?

**Answer for yourself:** Once plain scriptural statements such as these are carefully pondered, how can anyone who sincerely seeks to inherit the Kingdom presume to think that he or she is exempt from commandment-keeping?



**Answer for yourself:** If so, then he or she does not comprehend the scriptures. The question that should be eagerly asked is, 'Which commandments must I, a Gentile believer in God through Yeshua, strive to obey'?

**Answer for yourself:** Have I, a Gentile believer in God through Yeshua (the Christ of God), been given the exact same commandments as the Jew, or have I as a Gentile believer been given by God only some of them (Acts 15 and Isa. 56 hold the answer)? Let me give you a hint that being Acts 15 sets our for non-Jews the Laws of Noah as a pattern for life and as Moses is taught more to them in the synagogues they will learn that they can choose more of God's will in the form of other Commandments to acquire in their lives (implement Isaiah chapter 56 in their lives). More on that later.

But, for all too many, there is no comprehension of the importance of yielding to Heavenly laws; therefore, for them, that question does not even arise.

## FAILURE TO COMPREHEND THE LAW CORRECTLY

Every person who has the ability to read or to listen, but who does not comprehend the scriptures fails to do so because of one of three basic reasons. Either the person does not want to understand; or he or she is not intended to understand; or, he or she has been misled by errant and slothful pastors. Admittedly, each of us has, to some degree, failed to correctly comprehend the scriptures -- for one or more of the above reasons. The good news, however, is that the future of our understanding can be rather bright.

But let us return to the reasons for failure to comprehend the importance of the eternal laws.

- Firstly, there are those people who simply do not want to understand. Next within this category, there are those who are afraid to understand. Like the disciples, of whom it was written: "They understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him" (Mark 9:32). Understanding brings with it the added responsibility to make a decision -- to take some action, and to obey. Knowledge and understanding replace ignorance. When that happens, there remains no excuse (John 15:22). New, more clear understanding brings with it a change of perspective. Change is temporarily uncomfortable to us. As humans, we tend to like to stay as we are. Growth requires us to be in flux -- off balance for the moment -- and obligates us to make decisions, and adjustments in our thinking and in our life-style.
- The second reason why people do not comprehend is that it is not foreordained that they should understand. Jesus told his disciples, when asked why he spoke so often in parables: *"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore, I speak unto them in parables...lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted, and I should heal them"* (Matthew 13:10-15). Again, Yeshua (Hebrew for Jesus) explained to his disciples: *"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to others in parables, that...they might not see, and...they might not understand."* He explained that in the 'parable of the sower': the seeds that fell by the way side *"are they that hear; then cometh the adversary (devil), and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved"* (Luke 8:10-12).

Following this theme, Paul wrote that *"if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel...should shine unto them"* (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). While no one wants to think of himself or herself as being in this category, the undeniable fact is that the scriptures testify that there are many citizens of the planet who are not chosen (from before the foundation of the world) to understand the Word.

- Thirdly, we can misunderstand [not comprehend correctly] the scriptures because of those who have taught us, and the culture in which we were raised. Pastors, preachers, teachers, and parents are all liable to perpetuate and pass on un-truths. This usually occurs without any maliciousness on their part at all --

because they, themselves, were also deceived. In these instances, there is generally no active intent to lead anyone astray. However, misdirection may also occur because of fear of ridicule, or laziness on the part of pastors and teachers. There are multitudes of ministers who do not understand the law and the Bible yet they preach; and this because of the hardness of their hearts and their lack of dedication to study to ensure that they teach "truth" and not "error." They have fallen prey to tradition

There are many pastors and preachers and church-school teachers who are like the "blind watchmen" mentioned in Isaiah 56. There are numerous others who are slothful watchmen, not lifting the voice of warning because of their own self interests, or because of fear of losing their salary as a paid hireling minister (Ezekiel 33:1-9; 2 Timothy 4:3; John 10:13). Many are the church leaders who frankly were not called, and not sent by the Father. As Paul asked, *"How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent" (Romans 10:14-15)?* There are a multitude of ministers and spiritual teachers who are metaphorically described as "wells without water," actually unable to provide spiritual drink for their parishioners who thirst (2 Peter 2:16). These are they who are uninspired, and who lack the Spirit of Truth to guide them. They substitute man-made theology, popular 'love' psychology, their own chosen 'flavor' of political philosophy, and written speeches copied from the sermons of other men, in place of the gospel of the Kingdom. **Emotionalism is what they substitute for righteousness.** They preach on subjects such as liberal humanistic morality, self-esteem, and wealth-building, because they themselves know not the right way. These are they who "worship...in vain" because they "teach for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

## WHEN DID THE LAW BEGIN ANYWAY?

The scriptures do speak of more than one set of laws. Some of the laws were from the beginning: they are endless and eternal. Some laws were added at a later time. Others were commandments related to a covenant with a particular individual or family. Still others were laws upon which there was a time or circumstantial limit placed. It is very important to understand this and be able to discern this when you read and study the Bible. Few do however and we hope to change that for the better by sound teaching on such subjects in this website.

**Answer for yourself:** Do the scriptures teach us that there was no law in effect before the exodus from Egypt and Sinai? No, not at all! The scriptures tell us just the opposite: that the law of God was given to man in Eden -- from the very beginning! Covenants contain laws and commandments as covenant responsibilities that God gave man as his part of the covenant relationship. If you have a covenant then you have certain responsibilities; these are called laws and commandments. And yet there are many who have been confused or misdirected into wrongly believing that "the law" is synonymous with everything that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, they mistakenly believe that before Moses, there was no law. Such thinking is completely wrong! Because sin is defined as the transgression of the law, then those who think that there was no law given to man before Sinai must erroneously conclude that there was no sin before Sinai! Such is foolishness.

At the first, Adam was told that he may not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The scripture tells us that, in some wonderful and mysterious way, within the fruit of that special tree was contained knowledge of right and wrong, of good and of evil. When Eve and Adam partook of it, their understanding "was opened," and they were ashamed of themselves. Elohim said "man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Genesis 3:22). As Paul wrote, the knowledge of sin comes through the law (Romans 3:20). It is obvious, then, that the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil contained within it, in some miraculous manner, the basic laws of right and wrong and of right conduct toward the Creator and fellow-man.

## NO LAW....NO SIN...HOW CAN THAT BE?

There was indeed a law given to those favored of Yahweh long before Sinai. If there had been no law, then there could have been no sin, and therefore, no punishment. If there had been no law from the days of Adam and Eve,



then, according to Paul's explanation (that where there is no law there is no transgression, and therefore no sin imputed), the Eternal Father would have been unjustified in rejecting Cain's offering.

**Answer for yourself:** How could Jehovah fairly have rejected Cain's efforts, if Cain had not had prior knowledge of the proper and acceptable way to present an offering? We may not have been told everything in Genesis, but such knowledge of man's responsibilities and duties toward God and his fellow man are implied; such responsibilities were always expressed as laws and commandments which, when properly understood, were reflective of the "loving" response toward either God or mankind.

**Answer for yourself:** How could the Eternal Father go on to justly punish Cain for murdering his brother, if Cain had not known that there was a law against murder?

**Answer for yourself:** Was He justified or unjustified in rejecting and punishing Cain in these matters? He was justified, because He is "righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works" (Psalm 145:17).

**Answer for yourself:** If there was no law from the beginning, how could any man have been considered 'righteous'?

Yet the scriptures declare that Noah was *'righteous.'* (*Genesis 7:1*) He was, in fact, the only righteous man in his generation. The rest of the world was wicked.

**Answer for yourself:** How could a just God become angry enough with man to bring a devastating flood upon the earth, unless He expected man to have behaved otherwise?

**Answer for yourself:** And how could they have behaved otherwise (not sinned), unless they had been given a law, and a set of commandments to follow?

*"Sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13).* The wicked are those who transgress the law (Psalm 119:53).

**Answer for yourself:** How, then, could anyone in days of old be labeled as "wicked" if there had been no law before Sinai?

Yet the Sodomites *"were wicked and sinners before the Lord continually" (Genesis 13:13).*

**Answer for yourself:** Since, as Paul wrote, no sin is imputed where there is no law; and since, as David wrote, the Eternal Father is "righteous in all His ways," how could He have been justified in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, if there had there been no law given in those days? He couldn't!

**Answer for yourself:** How could Abraham have had a discussion with the Angel of the Lord concerning people who were righteous and people who were wicked if there had been no law (therefore, no definition of righteousness or wickedness) prior to Moses' day? He couldn't have!

As we shall discover shortly, there are numerous passages of scripture that affirm to us that there was a law given to man from the very beginning. There was a law that began in Eden, and was given to the family of Adam.

## MORE THAN ONE LAW GIVEN

Before we proceed, we must recognize that there was more than one category of law that was given to the children of Israel through Moses. We have already begun to realize that there were the timeless 'commandments of the covenant,' as well as the temporary Levitical 'law of performances and ordinances.' However, there were also other laws -- laws that do not fit so easily into either category. These include the civil or political laws. Laws concerning property and inheritances. Laws of personal hygiene. Laws of retribution,

laws governing the rights of the poor, and compensation for victims of crime. And there were other miscellaneous laws. At least some of these laws seem to have been added following the sojourn at Sinai. Most of these laws were in some way conditional, and dependent upon conditions and circumstances. In this article, we will not attempt to deal with this category of conditional laws.

**The main focus of these articles are to help you to discern the eternal laws -- the laws that were not conditional, or which were intended to be observed from beginning to ending.** As we proceed, we do so reverently, not dogmatically, with the acknowledgment that the ways of our God are far above our understanding. The commandments of an eternal nature are sometimes referred to as the "royal law" -- the law that had been given to man from the beginning. To be sure, that law was being re-stated at Sinai. The laws that were being reiterated at Sinai were the same as the laws that had been given to Adam. The laws which Adam had received in the beginning were passed on from generation to generation among his righteous seed. The law that was given to Adam and his generations was preserved in the ark with Noah [as a type and shadow of the Ark of the Covenant].

The children of God were not ever left without a law. God's children would indeed spiritually "dwindle and perish in unbelief" without His law. **At Mount Sinai, the same law was uttered again by the voice of the great 'I Am' directly to the Israelites, as part of the covenant He made with them. These precious and perfect laws had previously been known and observed by Jacob and his sons, when they had immigrated to Egypt. Some of these same laws had been known by Noah and others; even Adam. But, with the passing of many generations, and the bondage of slavery, the nation of Israel had lost sight of these laws during their hundreds of years of captivity.**

## WHAT ABOUT THE ADDED LAW?

To be sure, there was an added law. The apostle Paul said that the added law was given by Moses because of transgressions until the Seed [the Messiah] should come (Galatians 3:16-19). The added law was just that -- added.

**Answer for yourself:** Added to what?

**Moses could not add something, unless something else had already existed.** And certainly that which had existed from the beginning, could not be spoken of as having been added. One only has to study Egyptian religion and even Summer to find the first "Torahs" (Hebrew for instruction...from God). Moses could not add to the Divine law that was revealed in the beginning to Adam, and which was known and obeyed by the patriarchs.

**Answer for yourself:** Then what was the law that was "added"?

**While Israel was gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai, Yahweh added, because of the sin of the Golden Calf, the laws of performances & ordinances as a consequence of the sins of the Golden Calf. Those laws were given to Moses, and were inextricably linked to the Aaronic priesthood and the Tabernacle.** It was expedient that there should be a very strict law given to the children of Israel because they were a stiff-necked people: quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God. Therefore, there was a law given them; a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God, and their duty towards Him. This "law or laws" were over and above the Laws and Commandments given to Adam and the Patriarchs. Speaking of the law which consisted of "ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary," we read that this consisted of "meats and drinks [offerings], and divers washings [purifications], and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the reformation (Hebrews 9:10). **This litany of ceremonial laws became utterly inseparable from the Aaronic priesthood.**



The Levitical priesthood existed only for the purpose of administering those outward ordinances. It did not save nor bring atonement because atonement was procured long before an animal was killed by the confession and repentance of the sinner before he brought his animal to the priest to have it killed. Only in a symbolic way was the life in the blood of the animal representative of the offerer and as the animal's blood was placed on the altar the sinner, since repentance, saw himself once again at-that-moment (atonement) in right relationship with God on the altar once again. This message of animal sacrifice and how it worked as totally been misunderstood by Gentile Christianity.

In fact, it was by the law that a man served in the Levitical priesthood. To that order of priesthood Yeshua, himself, could not belong (Hebrews 7:13-14). But there was (and is) another priesthood. The same that was from the beginning, and will be forever. It is the priesthood that Melchisedek held. It is 'without father, without mother, without descent.' (Hebrews 7:3; Psalm 110:4). By contrast to this, the Levitical priesthood was conferred solely because of one's parentage and descent. The priesthood of Melchisedek has 'neither beginning of days, nor end of life.' But the Levitical priesthood did have a beginning that commenced with the laws of performances and ordinances; and it did have an end of existence when the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. Also of interest is the fact that Melchisedek was a non-Jew who ministered to non-Jews Eternal Life (the Laws of Noah). Interesting to note is that for the most part Judaism has no outreach to the non-Jew and have failed to be a light to the nations as was their calling, however, in an ironic way the messianic believers in "the Christ" of the first century took the revelation of the Laws of Noah and the Covenant of Noah to the Gentile world. Sadly today the Christian world has lost its Jewishness and no longer understands how they fit and relate to the Israel of God. In this way the followers of "the Christ" yet operated as a Royal Priesthood to the world as was their calling, but not as an Aaronic Priesthood but rather as a Priesthood of Melchisedek...to the non-Jew.

It is to this "added law" we will look shortly for the understanding of it is paramount for the New Testament believer. Shalom.



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## MARCION'S "GOSPEL OF THE LORD" OR THE "GOSPEL OF LUKE"...WHICH CAME FIRST?

The question of priority, as between the "gospel of Marcion" and the later "gospel of Luke", is one of the most interesting and intriguing stories we find in the history of New Testament studies.

From the commencement of the third, down to the beginning of the present century, it has been fashionable to accuse Marcion of corrupting the Gospel of Luke; the emphatic and oft-repeated assertions of Tertullian and Epiphanius to that effect, having been deemed sufficient authority.

Bishop Marsh was one of the first to do Marcion justice. He said there was no proof that Marcion used Luke's Gospel at all [Notes to Michaelis, vol.3, pt. 2, p. 160]. Since then, many of the most intelligent German critics have come to the same conclusion; namely that it was not Marcion who corrupted the gospel tradition but Rome who refuted it by creating a later gospel tradition of their own which they presented in 180 C.E. to the world in the names of deceased apostles and Paul.

Baring-Gould also says: "Marcion was too conscientious and earnest a man, wilfully to corrupt a gospel" [Lost and Hostile Gospels, p.241].

It would seem from the sources consulted that it is not a stretch of the imagination to see that the Church of Sinope, where Marcion formerly resided, had been furnished by Paul with a collection of the records of the life and teaching of Christ; that Marcion thus obtained his gospel, and brought it to Rome [Ibid.].

Now we need to pay close attention to what some scholars admit. Again: "Marcion's Gospel contained a different arrangement of the narrative, from the canonical Luke, and was without many passages which it is not possible to believe he wilfully excluded," [Ibid p. 242]. Once I came to understand Marcion, Gnosticism, Marcion's unique brand of Gnostic theology then it became relatively easily to understand that key omissions in Marcion's collection of apostolic written tradition and Pauline written tradition could only be blamed upon the lack of existence of such writings in his day. No good reason can be found as to why Marcion would have not strengthened his position and theological arguments against the Jews and literalist Roman positions other than the fact that such passages did not exist at that time. They will be invented later by the Holy Roman Forgery Mill.

This becomes painfully evident when one contrast Marcion's New Testament with the later Roman Second New Testament and these omissions and additions compared line upon line. I was consistently shocked to see such passages omitted in Marcion's First New Testament which theologically would have supported his arguments against the Jews let along the "literalistic" Roman Church which mysteriously appear some 40 years later in the Roman refutation of Marcion's First New Testament. For the life of me I could not ever understand why key passages that would support and bolster Marcion's theological points from both apostolic tradition and Pauline tradition would be



omitted by Marcion if they had existed when he collected all the Pauline writings and apostolic traditions existing in his day.

Baring-Gould in his Lost and Hostile Gospels afterward speaks of differences of arrangement in Marcion's gospel which are unaccountable on the theory that Marcion corrupted Luke, and says that Marcion's Gospel was without several passages which apparently favor his views. [Ibid, p.243].

Canon Westcott is equally explicit in acquitting Marcion from the accusation made against him by the early fathers of the church. He says: "Tertullian and Epiphanius agree in affirming that Marcion altered the text of the books which he received, to suit his own views; and they quote many various readings in support of the assertion. Those which they cite from the epistles, are certainly insufficient to prove the point; and on the contrary, they go to show that Marcion preserved without alteration, the text which he found in his manuscript. Of the seven readings noticed by Epiphanius, (in the epistles), only two are unsupported by other authority: and it is altogether unlikely that Marcion changed other passages, when, as Epiphanius himself shows, he left untouched those which are most directly opposed to his system." -[Canon Westcott, History of the Canon, p.284].

**Answer for yourself:** Does it stand to reason that Marcion would leave passages in his collection of written apostolic tradition and the Pauline epistles which opposed what he believed and taught but yet omitted key passages that supported this Gnostic theology if they existed in the documents he collected?

Don't underestimate the hatred of the Church Father for anything opposed to what they considered "orthodoxy." Such hatred for truth and any that opposed the strict mind control of Rome would be branded a "heretic." Marcion is a perfect example of one who taught what the earliest Christians held to be true and dear; that "the Christ" was a "Divine Concept" within all mankind; exemplified in a theophany, Jesus, who was sent from Heaven. For Marcion his Christ was not a fleshly person as Rome would maintain later. Such hatred by Rome will ultimately result in myriads of persecutions that will in the end slaughter over 18,000,000 believers during the Dark Ages that opposed the Mother Roman Church in one form or another.

Some writers still persist in repeating the old slander. But the more candid and intelligent opinion of Westcott and Baring-Gould, is supported by Semler, Griesbach, Loeffler, Schmidt, Schleiermacher, Hahn, and many other scholars. Simply said the hatred of such reputed Church Fathers like Tertullian and Epiphanius caused a slander of not only Marcion and the faith of the earliest Christians but was the impetus for the literary corruption of the First New Testament where these earliest concepts and religious beliefs about "the Christ" have been lost to all but those with the necessary knowledge to know better; few possess it.

These writers, perceiving how little reliance is to be placed upon the statements of the fathers, in matters of critical exegesis, or of authorship, or upon their assertions concerning the heretics, have examined carefully the text of Marcion, and finding the statements of Tertullian and Epiphanius unsupported by internal evidence, have rejected them altogether.

**WHICH WAS FIRST WRITTEN...MARCION'S GOSPEL OR THE GOSPEL OF LUKE WE HAVE TODAY?**

Let us now see if we cannot ascertain with reasonable certainty which was first written; the Gospel of Luke or the Gospel of Marcion. The question of priority, in this case, is closely connected with that of brevity.

The first three chapters of Luke were entirely wanting in Marcion, except the opening clause in the third chapter, which was the commencement of the Gospel of Marcion: "In the fifteenth year of the

***reign of Tiberius Caesar."*** The balance of the first chapter of Marcion is contained with some variations in the fourth of Luke. **About half that chapter is wanting entirely, in Marcion.**

After passing this, the different chapters of the two gospels correspond, the 2nd of Marcion with the 5th of Luke, the 3rd of Marcion with the 6th of Luke, and so on.

The Gospel of Luke is the most copious throughout. **The number of verses in Luke in excess of those in Marcion, is as follows:** In chapter 7, seven verses: in ch. 8, one; in ch. 11, ten; in ch. 12, three; in ch. 13, seventeen; in ch. 14, five; in ch. 15, twenty-two; in ch. 18, four; in ch. 19, twenty; in ch. 20, twelve; in ch. 21, three; in ch. 22, thirteen; in ch. 23, one, and in ch. 24, four: **a total 122 verses in Luke which are not in Marcion's earliest "gospel."** **To this add the excess of 23 verses in the 4th chapter of Luke, and we have altogether 145 verses, or more than three average chapters. Add the first three chapters of Luke, which are entirely wanting in Marcion, and the result is, more than six chapters, or more than one-fourth of the entire Gospel of Luke, wanting in Marcion.**

**Answer for yourself:** Did Rome just happen to find these "missing gospel passages" or were then invented to counter what the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ" and Rome used creative license in the names of supposed Apostolic followers of Jesus to change what they did not want to accept? **THINK**

*When you begin to see just what "theologically" the earliest Christians believed about "the Christ"; namely that it is a Divine Concept among and within all mankind and not just one historical person as we have been led to believe, then you should see that these "key" added sections to Marcion's earliest "gospel" are intended to present such "literal-human" theology as imposed upon "the Christ." Take a look back again as what we have shown and see that these added portions to Marcion's gospel are about a human birth, human infancy, etc.; a human being presented as the "one" and only "Christ." Again this is totally against the earliest concepts of "the Christ" [logos] as handed down since time began and which was also believed by the earliest Christians.*

But this is not all. **In a number of places, the verses of Marcion are shorter. Then, again, two or more verses of Luke are contained, in substance, in one of Marcion, and in one place, nine verses of Luke in two of Marcion.** This phenomena is called "the Law of Accretion" whereby words or sentences are added later thereby enlarging a prior piece of literature. In other words the New Testament gets larger and more voluminous after Marcion's collection of it as it existed in his day.

## LUKE AND MARCION COMPARED

Leaving out of view, for the present the wholesale accumulation of matter, aggregating 315 verses, the law of accretion will be well illustrated by those cases where one or more verses in Marcion are found swollen into several in Luke, or where a single passage has additions. They are as follows:

1.

MARCION, ch. 1, v.4.	LUKE ch. 4, v.34.
Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, Jesus?	Saying, Let (us) alone; what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth?

The difference is important. According to Matthew, the parents of Jesus, when they returned from Egypt, being warned of God in a dream, turned aside, (they were going to Bethlehem or Jerusalem,) into the parts of Galilee,



that a certain prophecy might be fulfilled. The language does not imply that Nazareth was their residence; all the more strange since many believe the messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

The theory of the author of Luke was, that Nazareth was their residence. Accordingly, in this passage, which, though followed in Mark, has no parallel in Matthew; Jesus is addressed as "of Nazareth," a phrase not in Marcion. Yet the writer of the Gospel of Luke totally disagrees.

## II.

A corresponding variation will be found in

<b>MARCION, 1.10.</b>	<b>LUKE, 4.16.</b>
And he came to Nazareth, and as his custom was, etc.	And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, etc.

These are probably interpolations, made for the purpose of establishing Nazareth as the birth-place of Jesus. Again we now know that Marcion and the earliest Gnostic Christians understood "the Christ" entirely different from the way we have been instructed by Roman and Protestant theology. Rome will counter Marcion's First New Testament by given "flesh" to this "Christ" as if "the Christ" was flesh and bone. We see this again perfectly as "being brought up" would indicate a rearing instead of a descent from Heaven as Marcion and others believed. Marcion's Gospel of the Lord began with: ***1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, 2. [Pontius Pilatus being the Governor of Judea] Jesus came down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was...***

We see clearly the "descent" of the Heavenly Logos, the Gnostic Redeemer from heaven. This Gnostic Savior had no fleshly body but was a pure Spiritual apparition among men. Thus we find no mention in the earliest New Testament of a fleshly Jesus as "the Christ." We find no infancy narratives or any of the events we normally associate with the Christmas story. Again we need to understand that these parts of the Second New Testament only surface after 180 C.E. with the influence and work of Irenaeus as he counters Marcion's First New Testament with one from Rome's "literalism."

## III.

<b>MARCION, 3.19.</b>	<b>LUKE 6.19.</b>
And the whole multitude sought to touch him.	And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went Virtue out of him, and healed (them) all

There is no reason why Marcion, who had not rejected the miracles of Christ, should omit the closing sentence. It is more probable that it was added in Luke, to give expression to a very natural inference on the part of the writer, as to the object of the multitude in pressing forward toward Jesus, and seeking to touch him. Again we see the emphasis upon "touching flesh" inserted into the later editing of Marcion's New Testament.

There is no parallel in the other gospels.

## IV.

<b>MARCION, 4.29</b>	<b>LUKE, 7.36.</b>
And going into the house of a	And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he

**Pharisee, he ate with him.**

**went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.**

Lest you think that the risen Christ could not "eat" and that by "eating" then one had to have a fleshly body let me remind you that Christ said: Luke 22:18 *18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (KJV)* It would seem that in a "resurrected" spiritual state, which the Gnostic Christians understood "the Christ," eating was possible in some sort of way. This not make it mandatory that the Jesus of Marcion had to possess flesh.

V.

#### JESUS AND THE SINFUL WOMAN.

**MARCION, 4, 30.**

**But a sinful woman, standing near, before his feet, washed them with tears, and anointed them, and kissed them.**

**LUKE, 7.37 and 38.**

**37. And behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that (Jesus) sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,**

**38. And stood at his feet, behind (him,) weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe (them) with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed (them) with the ointment.**

This touching incident, simply and beautifully told in the sixteen Greek words of Marcion, is spun out, by the author of Luke, into more than three times the number of words, with no improvement in the story.

**The washing of the feet of Jesus, which in Marcion is left as a figurative expression, denoting the great grief of the woman, is stated in Luke as an actual fact.** while weeping, "she began to wash his feet with tears." Then, having washed them, she must needs "wipe them with the hairs of her head."

**There can be but little doubt, that Marcion was first written, and that the author of Luke drew upon his imagination in filling up the text.**

Again, there is a similar variation, in the following reference to the same transaction:

VI.

**MARCION, 4.36.**

**And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest me no water for my feet. She has washed my feet with her tears, and has anointed them, and kissed them.**

**LUKE, 7.44 to 46.**

**44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped (them) with the hairs of her head**

**45. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.**

**46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.**

**The use here, by Jesus himself, of the figurative expression, "she hath washed my feet with tears," misled the author of Luke into conceiving, and hence expressing, a literal and complete washing of**



**feet, followed by wiping them in the manner described.**

**This account is not in the other canonical gospels. It is simply a question between Marcion and Luke.**

## **VII.**

### **JESUS REBUKING THE STORM.**

<b>MARCION, 5.22.</b>	<b>LUKE, 8.23, 24.</b>
<b>He was sleeping with the sailors, and he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the sea.</b>	<b>22. But as they sailed, he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled (with water), and were in jeopardy.</b>
	<b>24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying: Master, Master, we perish! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.</b>

**The language of Marcion, as given by Epiphanius, is highly elliptical. It was probably preceded by some sentence having reference to the storm. The text of the synoptics is more copious; especially Mark, in which a pillow is provided for the head of Jesus.**

## **VIII.**

### **HEALING OF THE WOMAN**

<b>MARCION, 5.41</b>	<b>LUKE, 8.43 to 45.</b>
<b>And a woman, touching him, was healed of an issue of the blood. And the Lord said, who has touched me?</b>	<b>43. And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed by any,</b>
	<b>44. Came behind (him), and touched the border of his garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchd.</b>
	<b>45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they who were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press [thee], and sayest thou, Who touched me?</b>

**If these accounts come from a common manuscript, it had passed through many hands, before reaching the author of Luke.**

## **IX, X.**

<b>MARCION, 6.22.</b>	<b>LUKE, 9.22.</b>
<b>Saying: The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be put to death, and after three days, rise again.</b>	<b>Saying: The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.</b>
<b>MARCION, 6.30.</b>	<b>LUKE, 9.30,31.</b>
<b>And behold two men talked with him; Elias and Moses in glory.</b>	<b>30. And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elias;</b>
	<b>31. Who appeared in glory and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.</b>

# XI, XII, XIII, XIV.

<p><b>MARCION, 6.34.</b></p> <p>From the cloud a voice, saying: This is my beloved son.</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 9.35.</b></p> <p>And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved son. Hear him.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 6.40.</b></p> <p>And he said to them, O, faithless generation; how long shall I suffer you?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 9.41.</b></p> <p>And Jesus answering said: O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 7.21.</b></p> <p>In that hour, he rejoiced in the spirit, and said: I thank thee, Lord of heaven, that, etc. (balance of the verse substantially as in Luke.)</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.21.</b></p> <p>In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that, etc.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 7.25.</b></p> <p>Master, doing what shall I obtain life?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.25.</b></p> <p>Master, what shall I do to inherit <i>eternal</i> life?</p>

The word *aioion*, (eternal,) was inserted by the author of Luke, to make more clear the meaning of Marcion.

The argument of Tertullian, (adv. Mar. 4.25), that Marcion struck out *aionion*, so that the question might be confined to this life, is weak and untenable. Again Tertullian has not been fair in his analysis of Marcion and misleads his readers; needless to say centuries of Christians who read his works.

# XV, XVI, XVII.

<p><b>MARCION, 7.26.</b></p> <p>And he said unto him, what is written in the law?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 10.26.</b></p> <p>He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 8.5.</b></p> <p>And shall go unto him at midnight, asking for three loaves?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.5.</b></p> <p>And shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves.</p>
<p><b>MARCION, 8.6.</b></p> <p>Ask and it shall be given. (<i>Aiteite, kai dotheesetai.</i>)</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.9.</b></p> <p>Ask, and it shall be given you. (<i>Aiteite, kai dotheesetai humin.</i>)</p>
<p><b>MARCION 8. 7, 8</b></p> <p>Who of you, being a father, if his son ask a fish, instead of a fish, will give to him a serpent? Or instead of an egg, a scorpion?</p> <p>If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your Father who is in heaven?</p>	<p><b>LUKE, 11.11 to 13.</b></p> <p>11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if (he ask) a fish, will he for a fish, give him a serpent?</p> <p>12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?</p> <p>13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall (your) heavenly Father</p>



give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?	
<b>MARCION, 8.24.</b>  This is an evil generation; they seek a sign; no sign shall be given it.	<b>LUKE, 11.29.</b>  This is an evil generation; they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet.
<b>MARCION, 9.4.</b>  I say unto you, be not afraid of them that kill the body; fear him who has power after killing, to cast into hell. ( <i>eis geenan.</i> )	<b>LUKE, 12.4, 5.</b>  4. But I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.  5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. ( <i>eis teen geenan.</i> ) Yea, I say unto you, fear him.

**The last passage illustrates, throughout, the prevailing practice of verbal accumulation.** The language of Jesus, "I say unto you," becomes, when it reaches the author of Luke, "I say unto you, my friends;" "Be not afraid of them that kill the body," becomes, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do;" etc. **The "fish story" of Marcion is becoming longer as time passes and with Rome's additions to the First New Testament.**

XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI.

<b>MARCION, 9.5.</b>  Him shall also the Son of Man confess before God.	<b>LUKE, 12.8.</b>  Him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. [Similar difference in the next verse.]
<b>MARCION, 9.34.</b>  And if he shall come in the evening watch, and shall find them so, blessed are those servants.	<b>LUKE, 12.38.</b>  And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find (them) so, blessed are those servants.
<b>MARCION 9.42.</b>  And the Lord of that servant will come, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers.	<b>LUKE, 12.46.</b>  The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for (him), and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.
<b>MARCION, 13.29.</b>  Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. Not after one has risen from the dead, will they listen.	<b>LUKE, 16.29 to 31.</b>  29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.  30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one, went unto them from the dead, they will repent.  31. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.
<b>MARCION, 14.10.</b>  So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you.	<b>LUKE, 17.10.</b>  So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

**MARCION, 15.31, 32.**

31. And it came to pass, as he came near to Jericho, a blind man cried out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

32. And when he had healed him, he said, thy faith hath saved thee.

**LUKE, 18.35 to 43.**

35. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way-side, begging:

36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38. And he cried, Saying: Jesus (thou) Son of David, have mercy on me!

39. And they who went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me!

40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him,

41. Saying: What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath saved thee.

43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, etc.

**Again the later "writing" of Luke's Gospel in response to Marcion's earliest Gospel of the Lord should be evident to all by now.**

**XXIV, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX.**

**MARCION, 16.9.**

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house.

**LUKE, 19.9.**

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

**MARCION, 19.4.**

And he communicated with the captains, how he might betray him unto them.

**LUKE, 22.4.**

And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

**MARCION, 19.14.**

And he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

**LUKE, 22.14.**

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

**MARCION, 19.51.**

And striking him, they said  
Prophecy; who is it that smote thee?

**LUKE, 22. 64.**

And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face; and asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

**The account in Marcion, besides being shorter, is the more natural. Being struck from behind, or by a stranger, Jesus was called upon to tell who struck him. It was an impulsive action. But the author of**



**Luke has the Jews deliberately blindfold Jesus, before striking him.**

XXXI.

<b>MARCION, 20.45.</b>	<b>LUKE, 23.46.</b>
And crying out with a loud voice, he expired.	And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

**These dying words of Jesus are not in either of the other three canonical gospels. They may have been taken by the author of Luke from the Acts of Pilate, or from a later version of the manuscript used by Marcion.**

XXXII.

<b>MARCION, 20.49.</b>	<b>LUKE, 23.50 to 53.</b>
And behold, a man named Joseph, taking down the body, wrapped it up, and placed it in a hewn tomb.	<p>50. And behold, (there was) a man named Joseph, a counselor; (and he was) a good man, and a just;</p> <p>51. (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.</p> <p>52. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus</p> <p>53. And he took it down and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher, that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.</p>

XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI.

<b>MARCION, 20.52.</b>	<b>LUKE, 23. 56.</b>
And returning, they rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.	And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.
<b>MARCION, 21.6.</b>	<b>LUKE, 24.6.</b>
He has risen; remember what he said, while yet living.	He is not here, but is risen; re member how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee.
<b>MARCION, 21.7.</b>	<b>LUKE, 24.7.</b>
That it was necessary that the Son of Man should suffer, and be delivered up.	Saying: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
<b>MARCION, 21.37.</b>	<b>LUKE, 24.38 and 39.</b>
And he said unto them, why are ye troubled?	38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
Behold my hands and my feet, a spirit hath not bones, as ye see me have.	39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

## THE OTHER SIDE

We will now give the cases where the text of Marcion is the more copious:

### I.

MARCION, 5.20. LUKE, 8.21.

According to Volkmar, (though not in the schedule or scholion of Epiphanius), in this verse, after the words, "And he answered and said unto them," is the question, "Who are my mother and my brethren?" Balance of the Verse, same as in Luke.

Volkmar may have taken some of his Variations from the "Dialogues," etc., attributed to Origen, to which he appears to have given too much attention.

### II, III, IV, V, VI.

MARCION, 9.26.  And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things of the flesh; ( <i>ton sarkikon</i> ).	LUKE, 12. 30.  And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.
MARCION, 14.2.  (On the authority of Volkmar.) It would be better for him if he had not been born; or if a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, etc. (This may have been the reading of Luke at that time. See Tertullian adv. Marcion, 4.35.)	LUKE, 17.2.  It were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, etc.
MARCION, 17.25.  But they who shall be accounted worthy of God, to obtain that world, etc.	LUKE, 20.35.  But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, etc.
MARCION, 20.2.  And they began to accuse him, saying: We found this fellow perverting the nation, and destroying the law and the prophets, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and turning away the women and children.	LUKE, 23.2.  And they began to accuse him saying: We found this (fellow) perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king.
MARCION, 21.5.  And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, those in white clothing said to them, etc.	LUKE, 24.5  And as they were afraid, and bowed down (their) faces to the earth, they said unto them, etc.

Here are six cases in Marcion, against thirty-six in Luke; or 35 new words in Marcion, to 660 in Luke. If to these we add 315 verses of Luke which are not in Marcion in any form, we have a ratio of 1 to 230.

*The strength of the argument, then, based upon the principle of accretion, would be 230 to 1, that the Gospel of Marcion was first written.*



## BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ORDER OF ARRANGEMENT OF GOSPEL MATERIALS?

But there is other evidence of priority. The Gospel of Marcion is more simple and natural, not only in the mode of expression, but in the order of arrangement.

In the fourth chapter of Luke, Jesus is represented as being tempted in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism; thence he returned into Galilee, and came to Nazareth; [Luke, 4. 16]; where his public ministry commenced. Now pay attention! But though commencing, at Nazareth, he is made to refer [v. 23], to works which he had done at Capernaum; a place to which he goes, afterward ;[v. 31.]

**Answer for yourself:** How can this be? This is out of order; somebody got it wrong and most likely miscopied an earlier manuscript from Marcion in the rewriting of the later New Testament. This means that an earlier copy, the copies of Marcion's collection, were as scholars tell us used by later writers of the gospels where they added much to them in their attempt to refute what the Gnostic Christians believed about "the Christ."

In Marcion, on the contrary, his public ministry commenced at Capernaum; [Marcion, 1. 1]; whence, [v.10], he came to Nazareth, and preached; and here, in the natural order, [v.13], he refers to the works done at Capernaum.

This accords with the Gospel of Matthew, which represents that Jesus did not commence preaching until after he had taken up his residence in Capernaum. [Matt. 4. 13 to 17.] Mark follows Luke.

Matthew and Marcion were probably from a common manuscript.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is represented as performing his first miracle in Cana of Galilee, after which he went down to Capernaum. [John 2. 11, 12.] This, therefore, is confirmatory of Marcion and that the writer of Luke again gets this wrong! No Holy Spirit here!

It is probable that in Luke, the manuscripts were put together out of their natural order, and that this disorder was followed in Mark. It was the opinion of Griesbach that the author of Mark had before him the whole of the present Gospel of Luke. Schleiermacher thinks he had some of the manuscripts which comprise the Gospel of Luke [ Schleiermacher on Luke, p.91].

At the same time, the fact that nearly every word of Marcion is in Luke, besides much additional matter, is strongly suggestive of the theory, that the author of Luke had before him, besides other material, the Gospel of Marcion entire. On the supposition that Marcion was last written, it is difficult to conceive why he should have excluded so large a part of the Gospel of Luke, especially as it is now conceded that it was not done for dogmatic purposes. On the other hand, if Luke was written last, the accumulations were in accordance with the spirit of the age, and the practice of the times. Besides, it was necessary to have a gospel different from that of Marcion, who was a heretic. There is no satisfactory evidence that Marcion had seen either of the canonical gospels, or had even heard of them.

The first two chapters of Luke were wanting in the gospels of the first century. Rome would later have to created a body for "the Christ" if Jesus was to be their incarnated and fleshly "Christ."

*Heb 10:5 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (KJV)*

There is a big problem with this if you look at the Hebrew from which this supposed quote is taken. Again we find forgery in the New Testament as Psm. 40:6-8 says nothing of the sort.

*6 ¶ (40:7) Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required.*

Greater lies have never been told as we have before us a prime example of Roman creative theology as they purposefully misquote the Psalms whereby incarnational theology to give "the Christ" a fleshly body is made out of a passage declaring how God had opened the ears of mankind in order for them to please Him through learning and living of the Torah and His Commandments.

The first two chapters of Luke were also wanting in the Gospel of the Hebrews, or Nazarenes, about A.D. 125, as well as in the Gospel of Marcion, A.D. 145. They first appeared in the the Gospel of Luke following Irenaeus' Second New Testament in 180 C.E.

**Answer for yourself:** Then is it not fair to say that early Church Fathers have misrepresented and deceitfully discredited Marcion's "Gospel of the Lord" and added much to the later "Gospel of Luke" and presented it to the world as if written by Luke when it was not?

**Answer for yourself:** What accounts in the Gospel of Luke are pure fabrications created on purpose to further the Roman agenda of changing the earliest concepts of "the Christ" which were symbolic, metaphoric, and allegorical into a "literal" interpretation as if "the Christ" was a human and that human was according to the Roman Gospel Jesus of Nazareth?

Again we must not get confused as God anoints His servants but such different levels of anointing must not cause us to fail to see the forgery presented before us whereby "the Christ" was make an exclusive human being when in fact we all possess "the Christ." Yeshua was used by God in tremendous ways and the Jewish Messiah was to have and possess "this Christ" as well but the understanding of this must not blind us to the exclusiveness imposed upon Jesus in the New Testament and the forgery of events that accompany such literary creationism for the theological agendas of Rome.

Let us now turn to examine what various scholars have to say about the Roman forgery of the First New Testament as we see what they have to say about the continual falsification of these documents down through





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## THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS

**0:1 Polycarp and the presbyters that are with him unto the Church of God which sojourneth at Philippi;  
0:2 mercy unto you and peace from God Almighty and Jesus Christ our Saviour be multiplied.**

**1:1 I rejoiced with you greatly in our Lord Jesus Christ, for that ye received the followers of the true Love and escorted them on their way, as befitted you--those men encircled in saintly bonds which are the diadems of them that be truly chosen of God and our Lord;**

**1:2 and that the stedfast root of your faith which was famed from primitive times abideth until now and beareth fruit unto our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured to face even death for our sins, {whom God raised, having loosed the pangs of Hades;**

**1:3 on whom, though ye saw Him not, ye believe with joy unutterable and full of glory;}**

**1:4 unto which joy many desire to enter in;**

**1:5 forasmuch as ye know that it is {by grace ye are saved, not of works,} but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.**

**2:1 {Wherefore gird up your loins and serve God in fear} and truth, forsaking the vain and empty talking and the error of the many, {for that ye have believed on Him that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave unto Him glory} and a throne on His right hand;**

**2:2 unto whom all things were made subject that are in heaven and that are on the earth;**

**2:3 to whom every creature that hath breath doeth service;**

**2:4 who cometh as {judge of quick and dead;}**

**2:5 whose blood God will require of them that are disobedient unto Him.**

**2:6 Now {He that raised Him} from the dead {will raise us also;}**

**2:7 if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness;**

**2:8 {not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing} or blow for blow or cursing for cursing;**

**2:9 but remembering the words which the Lord spake as He taught;**

**2:10 {Judge not that ye be not judged.**

**2:11 Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you.**

**2:12 Have mercy that ye may receive mercy.**

**2:13 With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;}**

**2:14 and again {Blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.}**

**3:1 These things, brethren, I write unto you concerning righteousness, not because I laid this charge upon myself, but because ye invited me.**

**3:2 For neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he came among you taught face to face with the men of that day the word which concerneth truth carefully and surely;**

**3:3** who also, when he was absent, wrote a letter unto you, into the which if ye look diligently, ye shall be able to be builded up unto the faith given to you, {which is the mother of us all,} while hope followeth after and love goeth before--love toward God and Christ and toward our neighbour.

**3:4** For if any man be occupied with these, he hath fulfilled the commandment of righteousness;

**3:5** for he that hath love is far from all sin.

**4:1** {But the love of money is the beginning of all troubles.}

**4:2** Knowing therefore that {we brought nothing into the world neither can we carry anything out,} let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness, and let us teach ourselves first to walk in the commandment of the Lord;

**4:3** and then our wives also, to walk in the faith that hath been given unto them and in love and purity, cherishing their own husbands in all truth and loving all men equally in all chastity, and to train their children in the training of the fear of God.

**4:4** Our widows must be sober-minded as touching the faith of the Lord, making intercession without ceasing for all men, abstaining from all calumny, evil speaking, false witness, love of money, and every evil thing, knowing that they are God's altar, and that all sacrifices are carefully inspected, and nothing escapeth Him either of their thoughts or intents or any of the secret things of the heart.

**5:1** Knowing then that {God is not mocked,} we ought to walk worthily of Him commandment and His glory.

**5:2** In like manner deacons should be blameless in the presence of His righteousness, as deacons of God and Christ and not of men;

**5:3** not calumniators, not double-tongued, not lovers of money, temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord who became {a minister (deacon) of all.}

**5:4** For if we be well pleasing unto Him in this present world, we shall receive the future world also, according as He promised us to raise us from the dead, and that if we conduct ourselves worthily of Him {we shall also reign with Him,} if indeed we have faith.

**5:5** In like manner also the younger men must be blameless in all things, caring for purity before everything and curbing themselves from every evil.

**5:6** For it is a good thing to refrain from lusts in the world, for every {lust warreth against the Spirit,} and {neither whoremongers nor effeminate persons nor defilers of themselves with men shall inherit the kingdom of God,} neither they that do untoward things.

**5:7** Wherefore it is right to abstain from all these things, submitting yourselves to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ.

**5:8** The virgins must walk in a blameless and pure conscience.

**6:1** And the presbyters also must be compassionate, merciful towards all men, {turning back the sheep that are gone astray,} visiting all the infirm, not neglecting a widow or an orphan or a poor man:

**6:2** but {providing always for that which is honorable in the sight of God and of men,} abstaining from all anger, respect of persons, unrighteous judgment, being far from all love of money, not quick to believe anything against any man, not hasty in judgment, knowing that we all are debtors of sin.

**6:3** If then we entreat the Lord that He would forgive us, we also ought to forgive:

**6:4** for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and we must {all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ,} and {each man must give an account of himself.}

**6:5** Let us therefore so serve Him with fear and all reverence, as He himself gave commandment and the Apostles who preached the Gospel to us and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of our Lord;

**6:6** being zealous as touching that which is good, abstaining from offences and from the false brethren and from them that bear the name of the Lord in hypocrisy, who lead foolish men astray.

**7:1** For every one {who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist:}

**7:2** and whosoever shall not confess the testimony of the Cross, is of the devil;



**7:3** and whosoever shall pervert the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts and say that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, that man is the first-born of Satan.

**7:4** Wherefore let us forsake the vain doing of the many and their false teachings, and turn unto the word which was delivered unto us from the beginning, {being sober unto prayer} and constant in fastings, entreating the all-seeing God with supplications that He {bring us not into temptation,} according as the Lord said, {The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.}

**8:1** Let us therefore without ceasing hold fast by our hope and by the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ who {took up our sins in His own body upon the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,} but for our sakes He endured all things, that we might live in Him.

**8:2** Let us therefore become imitators of His endurance;

**8:3** and if we should suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him.

**8:4** For He gave this example to us in His own person, and we believed this.

**9:1** I exhort you all therefore to be obedient unto the word of righteousness and to practise all endurance, which also ye saw with your own eyes in the blessed Ignatius and Zosimus and Rufus, yea and in others also who came from among yourselves, as well as in Paul himself and the rest of the Apostles;

**9:2** being persuaded that all these {ran not in vain} but in faith and righteousness, and that they are in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered.

**9:3** For they {loved not the present world,} but Him that died for our sakes and was raised by God for us.

**10:1** Stand fast therefore in these things and follow the example of the Lord, {being firm in the faith} and {immovable, in love of the brotherhood kindly affectioned one to another,} partners with the truth, {forestalling one another} in the gentleness of the Lord, despising no man.

**10:2** {When ye are able to do good,} defer it not, for {Pitifulness delivereth from death.

**10:3** Be ye all subject one to another, having your conversation} unblameable {among the Gentiles, that from your good works} both ye may receive praise and the Lord may not be blasphemed in you.

**10:4** But {woe to him through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed.}

**10:5** Therefore teach all men soberness, in which ye yourselves also walk.

**11:1** I was exceedingly grieved for Valens, who aforetime was a presbyter among you, because he is so ignorant of the office which was given unto him.

**11:2** I warn you therefore that ye refrain from covetousness, and that ye be pure and truthful.

**11:3** Refrain from all evil.

**11:4** But he who cannot govern himself in these things, how doth he enjoin this upon another? If a man refrain not from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the Gentiles who {know not the judgment of the Lord.

**11:5** Nay, know we not, that the saints shall judge the world,} as Paul teacheth? But I have not found any such thing in you, neither have heard thereof, among whom the blessed Paul laboured, who were his {letters} in the beginning.

**11:6** For {he boasteth of you in} all those {churches} which alone at that time knew God;

**11:7** for we knew Him not as yet.

**11:8** Therefore I am exceedingly grieved for him and for his wife, unto whom may the Lord grant true repentance.

**11:9** Be ye therefore yourselves also sober herein, and {hold not such as enemies,} but restore them as frail and erring members, that ye may save the whole body of you.

**11:10** For so doing, ye do edify one another.

**12:1** For I am persuaded that ye are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you.

**12:2 But to myself this is not granted.**

**12:3 Only, as it is said in these scriptures, {Be ye angry and sin not,} and {Let not the sun set on your wrath.}**

**12:4 Blessed is he that remembereth this;**

**12:5 and I trust that this is in you.**

**12:6 Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal High-priest Himself, the [Son of] God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness and in all avoidance of wrath and in forbearance and long suffering and in patient endurance and in purity;**

**12:7 and may He grant unto you a lot and portion among His saints, and to us with you, and to all that are under heaven, who shall believe on our Lord and God Jesus Christ and on His Father {that raised Him from the dead.**

**12:8 Pray for all the saints.}**

**12:9 Pray also {for kings} and powers and princes, and {for them that persecute} and hat {you,} and for {the enemies of the cross,} that your fruit may be {manifest among all men,} that ye may be perfect in Him.**

**13:1 Ye wrote to me, both ye yourselves and Ignatius, asking that if any one should go to Syria he might carry thither the letters from you.**

**13:2 And this I will do, if I get a fit opportunity, either I myself, or he whom I shall send to be ambassador on your behalf also.**

**13:3 The letters of Ignatius which were sent to us by him, and others as many as we had by us, we send unto you, according as ye gave charge;**

**13:4 the which are subjoined to this letter;**

**13:5 from which ye will be able to gain great advantage.**

**13:6 For they comprise faith and endurance and every kind of edification, which pertaineth unto our Lord.**

**13:7 Moreover concerning Ignatius himself and those that were with him, if ye have any sure tidings, certify us.**

**14:1 I write these things to you by Crescens, whom I commended to you recently and now commend unto you:**

**14:2 for he hath walked blamelessly with us;**

**14:3 and I believe also with you in like manner.**

**14:4 But ye shall have his sister commended, when she shall come to you.**

**14:5 Fare ye well in the Lord Jesus Christ in grace, ye and all yours. Amen.**





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## CHRISTIANITY: DIVINE REVELATION OR A FRAUD?

Over the years I have at times written what I and many others have considered to be critical articles that brought their readers to crossroad decisions in their lives once knowledge was made available to them. These articles are possibly the most important ones I have ever written.

This paragraph as I write it is one of the most important statements I have ever made. On the surface it seems so simple but I assure you that the dynamics involved in its contemplation are explosive. I ask that you give serious attention and thought to what I will say and share with you in these articles. It has the ability to change your life and deliver you from the most darkest and vilest idolatry of which most of you are not yet aware.

In these articles I will disclose the substantial identity of Gentile Christianity as known and practiced today with the most popular and widespread "Pagan" religions of all time; that being a mixture of Sun worship, Nature worship, and Phallic worship.

You may be more familiar with such sun-worship by the term "Mithraism" or "Zoroastrianism." You might not be aware, and I find that the vast majority of Christians are not, but Mithraism was the closest and all but successful rival of Christianity in the Roman world, and which might indeed have been successful, but that, soon after Constantine prostituted the Empire to the Church,— "with the triumph of Christianity Mithraism came to a sudden end. The laws of Theodosius signed its death warrant." ([Catholic Encyclopedia](#), x, 402.) That there may be no suspicion that the recital of these remarkable identities of Christian "revelation" with Pagan inventions is fanciful or exaggerated, the tale shall be told in later articles in the quoted words of the famous [Catholic Encyclopedia, which naively makes so many extraordinary admissions without seeming to be aware of their fatal implications.](#)

### BUT FIRST...WHAT IS REVELATION...AND IS CHRISTIANITY BUILT UPON DIVINE, UNIQUE, AND GODLY REVELATION?

"The essence of Revelation lies in the fact that it is the direct speech of God to man," says the Holy Ghost speaking through the Vatican 18 (1870). Now for a simple truth that I believe every reader can accept. I want you to read the following statement several times. Let it sink in. Understand the depth of what is being said and implied for if you cannot agree with the following statement then there is no reason to continue the articles or the web pages.

***"When Pagan myths already current and long known to everyone for hundreds and thousands of years can be later found to be foundational to many dogmas and doctrines held sacred in Christianity because they are held and believed to be unique revelations from God, then Divine revelation and***

*inspiration cannot be appealed to for the origin of the Christian Faith and its teaching and such incriminating evidence must bring serious doubt to such doctrines and dogmas within Christianity as stemming from God... sadly these once held "sacred" doctrines must now understood as pagan copies."*

## DEFINING "REVELATION"

"Revelation may be defined as the communication of some truth by God to a rational creature through means which are beyond the ordinary course of nature. The truths thus revealed may be such as are otherwise inaccessible to the human mind—*mysteries*, which even when *revealed*, the intellect of man is incapable of fully penetrating". That is a pretty good definition of the process in my opinion.

Now it has also been said in the Decree 'Lamentabili' (3 July, 1907) by the Catholic Church:

- *"that the dogmas which the Christian Church proposes as revealed are 'truths which have come down to us from heaven' and not 'an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has acquired by its own strenuous efforts'" ( Vatican Decrees, 1870; Catholic Encyclopedia, xiii, I.)*
- *And, asserts the same Catholic Encyclopedia: "The existence of revelation (as in the New Testament) is as reasonably established as any historical fact"! (C.E. xiii, 607.)*

**These above two statements are the most incredible lies ever uttered in the history of mankind. And I will quickly prove them so.**

Lets get back to truth, shall we. "Divine Revelation is thus of things not previously known and which the revelationless mind of man is incapable of acquiring or inventing by its own efforts." Now I accept this statement as true for it is reasonable and makes sense. Divine Revelation rests thus upon the same principle as the Law of Patents and Copyright. A book published, that is made known and given to the world cannot be the subject of subsequent copyright even by its author. When an application for a patent is presented, the first act is to search the records to ascertain whether a similar art or article (truth) has ever previously been known and in use: if so, no patent can be obtained: the thing lacks novelty. I think you should agree with this.

**The exact same principle applies to "revelation".** So exactly with "revelation": if some impostor or deluded person (e.g. Mohammed or Joseph Smith) claims that he has received a personal—and therefore necessarily private—"revelation" from some god, **the only way whereby he can get a valid patent of authenticity and credibility for his "revelation," is to prove that its subject-matter has never before been known and in credulous circulation; the moment that from the search of the records—of other, or comparative religions,—it is shown that the same proposition has been previously known and current, in use and practice among some other priestcraft and its devotees—the thing is no revelation at all: the claim is a fraud!!!**

## PUTTING GENTILE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS DOCTRINES UNDER THE MICROSCOPE OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Let us see how this indisputable rule works when applied to Gentile Christianity.



- **In doing so we will either prove beyond any doubt that the Christian Faith is Divine unique revelation to mankind and worthy of trust and faith for the world to come or else is but the reiteration of prior pagan beliefs and is not to be trusted for truth or preparation for the world to come.**
- **The answer to such inquiry will either prove Christianity uniquely Divine and God breathed as is attested for it; or expose it as anything but Divine but rather pagan whereby then you would be better served to return to the faith once given the Saints; Biblical Judaism where the Gentile believer, as a Godfearer, has a place both within Biblical Judaism and the Israel of God and not apart from it.**

**After all you will be the judge of Christianity as to it's "Divineness" or it's "Fraudulence" once the all the evidence is presented to you for your consideration. Let us see what we can find, shall we?**



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# DISTURBING QUOTES ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH...CAN THIS BE TRUE AND I NOT KNOW IT?

Let us begin this serious study with a series of very disturbing quotes. The information presented in these Web Pages is not provided as a form of entertainment. I strongly suggest that you do not continue your study and search for truth in these pages unless you are willing to take responsibility for what you learn.

*2 Peter 2:21..."For it had been better for them not to have know the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them. (KJV)*

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL INCRIMINATES THE FAITH THAT HE IS TEACHING THE GENTILES

We find Saint Paul, the first Apostle of the Gentiles, avowing that he was made a minister of the Gospel which had already been preached to every creature under heaven...

*Col 1:23 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Did you catch that?

Paul is stating that he, the Apostle to the Gentiles, is preaching a message that **HAS ALREADY BEEN PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN!** This bears some deep thought. I did just that. This opened my heart and mind to considerable in-depth study to fathom out the depths of what this one verse alluded.

Simply said, Saint Paul was preaching a God manifest in the flesh, who had been believed on in the world **before** the commencement of his ministry. Dear one, this could not have been Jesus of Nazareth, who had certainly not been preached at that time, nor generally believed on in the world till ages after. Saint Paul owns himself a deacon, which is the lowest ecclesiastical grade of the Therapeutan church. Many wonderful books yet exist which explains this verse. Unfortunately it is not comforting to a Christian to learn the truth about "the Gospel" which Paul taught. I will now quote from a rather old book by Bunsen called The Angel-Messiah published in London in 1867. The following quote is taken from page 240:

*"The Gospel of which Paul's Epistles speak had been extensively preached and fully established before the time of Jesus by the Therapeutae or Essenes, who believed in the doctrine of the Angel-*



*Messiah, the Aeon from heaven; the doctrine of the "Anointed Angel," the doctrine of the atoning sacrificial death of Jesus by the blood of his cross; the doctrine of the Messianic ante-type of the Paschal lamb and of the Paschal omer, and thus the resurrection of Jesus Christ the third day according to the Scriptures-these doctrines of Paul can with more or less certainty be connected with the Essenes...It becomes almost a certainty that Eusebius was right in surmising that Essenic writing have been used by Paul and the evangelists. Not Jesus, but Paul, is the cause of the separation of the Jews from the Christians."*

**What Bunsen fails to tell us here explicitly, and which is alluded to only implicitly, is that the origin of this crucified "Angel-Anointed, Angel-Messiah" had its roots in the paganized worship of the Sun by the Gentile nations.**

What one fails to understand when he hears the word "Essene" is that in the time of Yeshua these "Essenes" were no longer a holy lineage from Zadok, but were rather Pythagorean in their beliefs. Such a religious synthesis explains on the part of the Essenes of the first century how they came to believe in the crucified Sun god-men of which I will explain later. Let us resume for now.

The very ancient and Eastern doctrine of an Angel-Messiah had been applied to Gautama-Buddha, who predicted that another Avatar (an incarnated deity in some shape in the earth; usually of Hindu origin) would come upon the earth in six hundred years after his death. This time had nearly expired; so Jesus of Nazareth was proclaimed as the expected Messiah by these Buddhist Jews, and the Sun-Myths were interwoven with his real history. Jesus unquestionably possessed a nature as divine as it is possible for a human being to possess, or he would not otherwise have been received as the Angel-Messiah by a sect so pure and holy as were the Essenes.

But let us not stop short of the other disturbing quotes.

## **THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS INCRIMINATE THEMSELVES AND THE GENTILE CHRISTIAN FAITH...AND I BET YOU NEVER KNEW THIS...DID YOU?**

In Seminary I remember looking at the Library shelves that supported the multiple volumes of the Ante-Nicean Fathers. I beheld thousand and thousands of pages of their writings. I even amused myself that to read and understand such a large volume of literature would take years. It did!

What I came to admire about such writings is when you read enough of them you find that these "pro-Christian" writers often incriminated themselves with what they wrote. The following examples are for your benefit.

### **JUSTIN MARTYR**

Eusebius, in his Church History, tells us that Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho, says "there exists not a people, civilized or semi-civilized, who have not offered up prayers in the name of a crucified Savior to the Father and Creator of all things" (Hist. Eccl. lib i. ch. iv).

The honesty of Justin Martyr as portrayed here is the heart of the subject matter of these web pages. I intend to show you that from the beginning of time the pagan nations had their "crucified Sun-gods" and much recorded about Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament is nothing more than the "re-telling" of the same Sun-Myths; the only difference is that now they are applied to the life of Jesus the Jew. **Do you want the truth before you die?** Then keep reading.

## EUSEBIUS

Eusebius says that "the names of Jesus and Christ were both known and honored by the ancients" (Hist. Eccl. lib. i. ch. iv). **How could this be?**

Eusebius, the great champion of Christianity, admits in his book: "that which is called the Christian religion is neither new nor strange, but-if it be lawful to testify the truth-was known to the ancients"

(Hist. Eccl. lib. 2, ch. v.). **How could this be?**

Eusebius, who is our chief guide for the early history of the Church, confesses that he was by no means scrupulous to record the whole truth concerning the early Christians in the various works which he has left behind him (Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., ch. viii. p. 21).

Edward Gibbon, speaking of Eusebius says: "The gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses that he has related what might rebound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace, of religion. Such an acknowledgment will naturally excite a suspicion that a writer who has so openly violated one of the fundamental laws of history has not paid a very strict regard to the observance of the other; and the suspicion will derive additional credit from the character of Eusebius, which was less tinctured with credulity, and more practiced in the arts of courts, than that of almost any of his contemporaries" (Gibbon, Rome, vol. ii., Philadelphia, 1876).

## SAINT AUGUSTINE

Augustine is quoted as saying: "That in our time is the Christian Religion, which to know and follow is the most sure and certain health, called according to that name, but not according to the thing itself, of which is the name; for the thing itself which is now called the Christian Religion really was known to the ancients, nor was wanting at any time from the beginning of the human race until the time when Christ came in the flesh, from whence the true religion, which had previously existed, began to be called "Christian;" and this in our days is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received this name" (Opera Augustini, vol. i. p. 12; quoted in Taylor's Diegesis, p. 42).

Now if you read these quotes you have to admit that they are very troubling to the contemporary Christian. I always heard: "Where there is smoke there is fire" [pardon the pun please]. If you find the courage to look beyond these quotes then you will find the kindling used for the paganization of Christianity by the Gentile Church whereby it become little more than another manifestation of Sun Worship. Jesus know the difference and you should as well.

## TERTULLIAN

Tertullian, one of the Christian Fathers (A.D. 200), originally a Pagan, and at one time Presbyter of the Christian Church in Africa, reasons in the following manner on the evidences of Christianity: "I find no other means to prove myself to be impudent with success, and happily a fool, than by my contempt of shame, - as, for instance, I maintain that the Son of God was born. Why am I not ashamed of maintaining such a thing? Why, but because it is itself a shameful thing. I maintain that the Son of God died. Well, that is wholly credible, because it is monstrously absurd. I maintain that after having been buried he rose again; and that I take to be mainly true, because it was manifestly impossible" (Taylor, Diegesis, p. 326).

For example, early Church Father Tertullian (@ 160-220 C.E.), an "ex-Pagan" and Bishop of Carthage, ironically admits the true origins of the Christ story and of all other such god-men by stating in refutation of his critics, "You say we worship the sun; so do you" (Wheless, Forgery in Christianity, p. 147).

Interestingly, a previously strident believer and defender of the faith, Tertullian later renounced Christianity. (Wheless, Forgery in Christianity, p. 147).



## OTHER INCRIMINATING QUOTES CHALLENGING THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

### THOMAS PAINE

"The Christian religion is a parody on the worship of the Sun, in which they put a man whom they call Christ, in the place of the Sun, and pay him the same adoration which was originally paid to the Sun."

### AMMONIUS SACCUS

Ammonius Saccus, a Greek philosopher, founder of the Neoplatonic school, taught that Christianity and Paganism when rightly understood, differ in no essential points, but had a common origin, and are really one and the same religion" (Taylor, Diegesis, p. 329).

### GODFREY HIGGINS

Godfrey Higgins, in Anacalypsis, states: "that every part of the vulgar Christian religion is the same as that of the vulgar religion of the Gentiles; that there is nothing new in the Roman Catholic religion; that, in short it is Reformed or Protestant Gentilism." He goes on to say: "several of the most important doctrinal parts of corrupt modern Christianity are nothing more than scraps of the Heathen mythologies of various kinds taught by different nations, long previous to the Christian era...the immaculate conception, the incarnation, the trinity, with its various hypostases, and the crucifixion and resurrection..." He further states: "It is more than probable that every part has been copied from some former religion; that no part of what has been really the system of the Christian priests was invented originally for their use. To tradition it is indebted for every doctrine and rite which it possesses; to fraudulent and dishonest practices it is chiefly indebted for their establishment."

### CELSUS

Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher, wrote that "the Christian religion contains nothing but what Christians hold in common with heathen; nothing new" (Justin, Apol 2).

Celsus, in the Octavius of Minucius Felix, says: "All these fragments of crack-brained opiniary and silly solaces played off in the sweetness of song by deceitful [Pagan] poets, by you too credulous creatures [that is, the Christians] have been shamefully reformed and made over to your own god]."

### ISAAC DE CASAUBON

Issac de Casaubon, one of the greatest ecclesiastical scholars, says: "It mightily affects me to see how many there were in the earliest times of the Church, who considered it as a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truth the help of their own inventions, in order that the new doctrine might be more readily received by the wise among the Gentiles. These officious lies, they were wont to say, were devised for a good end" (Taylor, Diegesis, p. 44).

### FAUSTUS

Faustus, writing to St. Augustine, says: "You have substituted your agape for the sacrifices of the Pagans; for their idols you martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honors. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivals of the Gentiles, their calendars, and their solstices; and as to their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the Pagans, except that you hold your assemblies apart from them" (Draper, Science and Religion, p. 48. New York: 1876).

## GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

Gregory, writing to St. Jerome, says: "A little jargon is all that is necessary to impose on the people. The less they comprehend the more they admire. Our forefathers and doctors have often said, not what they thought, but what circumstances and necessity dictated" (Hieron ad. Nep., quoted in Volney's Ruins, p. 177, Boston, 1872).

## ALBERT CHURCHWARD

Mythicist Albert Churchward stated a century ago: "The canonical gospels can be shown to be a collection of sayings from the Egyptian Mythos and Eschatology" (The Origin and Evolution of Religion).

## JOSEPH WHELESS

"The reason why all these narratives are so similar, with a god-man who is crucified and resurrected, who does miracles and has 12 disciples, is that these stories were based on the movements of the sun through the heavens, an astro-theological development that can be found throughout the planet because the sun and the 12 zodiac signs can be observed around the globe. In other words, Jesus Christ and all the others upon whom this character is predicated are personifications of the sun, and the Gospel fable is merely a rehash of a mythological formula (the "Mythos," as mentioned above) revolving around the movements of the sun through the heavens." The logical question arises: Why, if Jesus is a historical character, are there presently two dates for both Christmas and Easter? This purportedly well-known character, who set the world on fire, has no birthdate whatsoever, and the "historical" references and genealogies found in the gospel accounts differ from each other. The gospels are not history at all but a retelling of the Mythos. The historical Jesus is a phantom. "These, which cannot both be historical, are based on the two birthdays of the double Horus in Egypt." In addition, early Christian "doctors" were constantly contradicting themselves as to when exactly "the Lord" died or "ascended to heaven" after "he" was resurrected. Two of the most powerful early bishops, Irenaeus and Papias recorded that Christ lived to be very old, "flatly denying as 'heresy' the Gospel stories as to his crucifixion at about thirty years of age."

Joseph Wheless states, "The gospels are all priestly forgeries over a century after their pretended dates." "As said by the great critic, Salomon Reinach, 'With the exception of Papias, who speaks of a narrative by Mark, and a collection of sayings of Jesus, no Christian writer of the first half of the second century (i.e., up to 150 A.D.) quotes the Gospels or their reputed authors.'" In The Book Your Church Doesn't Want You to Read, John Remsburg states: "The Four Gospels were unknown to the early Christian Fathers. Justin Martyr, the most eminent of the early Fathers, wrote about the middle of the second century. His writings in proof of the divinity of Christ demanded the use of these Gospels had they existed in his time. He makes more than 300 quotations from the books of the Old Testament, and nearly one hundred from the Apocryphal books of the New Testament; but none from the four Gospels. Rev. Giles says: 'The very names of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are never mentioned by him (Justin) - do not occur once in all his writings.'" In A Short History of the Bible, Keeler says, "The books [canonical gospels] are not heard of till 150 A.D., that is, till Jesus had been dead nearly a hundred and twenty years. No writer before 150 A.D. makes the slightest mention of them." (J. Wheless, Forgery in Christianity).

"Those who concocted some of the hundreds of "alternative" gospels and epistles that were being kicked about during the first several centuries C.E. have even admitted that they had forged the documents." Wheless quotes the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Enterprising spirits responded to this natural craving by pretended gospels full of romantic fables, and fantastic and striking details; their fabrications were eagerly read and accepted as true by common folk who were devoid of any critical faculty and who were predisposed to believe what so luxuriously fed their pious curiosity. Both Catholics and Gnostics were concerned in writing these fictions. The former had no motive other than that of a PIOUS FRAUD."

Forgery during the first centuries of the Church's existence was admittedly rampant, so common in fact that a



new phrase was coined to describe it: "pious fraud." Wheless, op cit. Mangasarian states: "The church historian, Mosheim, writes that, 'The Christian Fathers deemed it a pious act to employ deception and fraud.' [Ecclesiastical Hist., Vol. I, p. 347.] Again, he says: 'The greatest and most pious teachers were nearly all of them infected with this leprosy.' Will not some believer tell us why forgery and fraud were necessary to prove the historicity of Jesus. . . . Another historian, Milman, writes that, 'Pious fraud was admitted and avowed by the early missionaries of Jesus.' 'It was an age of literary frauds,' writes Bishop Ellicott, speaking of the times immediately following the alleged crucifixion of Jesus. Dr. Giles declares that, 'There can be no doubt that great numbers of books were written with no other purpose than to deceive.' And it is the opinion of Dr. Robertson Smith that, 'There was an enormous floating mass of spurious literature created to suit party views.'"

Such prevarication is confessed to repeatedly in the Catholic Encyclopedia. Wheless: "The clerical confessions of lies and frauds in the ponderous volumes of the Catholic Encyclopedia alone suffice . . . to wreck the Church and to destroy utterly the Christian religion. . . . The Church exists mostly for wealth and self-aggrandizement; to quit paying money to the priests would kill the whole scheme in a couple of years. This is the sovereign remedy" (J. Wheless, Forgery in Christianity). As Wheless says, "The proofs of my indictment are marvelously easy."

## BARBARA WALKER

The assertion that Jesus Christ is a myth [reincarnation of Pagan Sun-Myths] can be proved not only through the works of dissenters and "pagans" who knew the truth - and who were viciously refuted or murdered for their battle against the Christian priests and "Church Fathers" fooling the masses with their fictions - but also through the very statements of the Christians themselves, who continuously disclose that they knew Jesus Christ was a myth founded upon more ancient deities located throughout the known ancient world. In fact, Pope Leo X, privy to the truth because of his high rank, made this curious declaration, "What profit has not that fable of Christ brought us!" (The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets, by Barbara Walker, p. 471). Rev. Taylor, in The Diegesis, reports a slightly different version of Leo X's admission: "It was well known how profitable this fable of Christ has been to us." (footnote, p. 35.)

## KERSEY GRAVES

The Jesus story incorporated elements from the tales of other deities recorded in this widespread area, such as many of the following world saviors and "sons of God," most or all of whom predate the Christian myth, and a number of whom were crucified or executed. Many on this list come from The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors by Graves. This is not to suggest that all of these god-men characters were utilized in the formation of the Christian myth, as overt contact had not occurred in such places as Mexico or Bermuda. Also, modern orthodoxy does not allow for the dates provided by Graves, i.e., that Quetzalcoatl originates in the 6th B.C.E., a date far too early in the orthodox perspective. However, we utilize this list to demonstrate that the same concepts are found worldwide with and without cultural exchange, because they are derived from the same astro-theological observations. Also, we are in concurrence with the "ancient advanced civilization" theory ("Atlantis") that would allow for one or more centralized civilizations to have spread throughout the world during a very remote period in protohistory, thus taking with it the well-developed Mythos and Ritual, which would then mutate into the various forms found around the globe.

## M. TURRETIN

Mr. Turretin, in describing the state of Christianity in the fourth century, says "that it was not so much the empire that was brought over to the faith, as the faith that was brought over to the empire; not the Pagans who were converted to Christianity, but Christianity that was converted to Paganism" (Taylor, Diegesis, p. 50).

## EDWARD GIBBON

Edward Gibbon says: "It must be confessed that the ministers of the Catholic Church imitated the profane

model which they were impatient to destroy. The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves that the ignorant rustics would more cheerfully renounce the superstitions of Paganism if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity. The religion of Constantine achieved in less than a century the final conquest of the Roman empire; but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals" (Gibbon, Rome, vol. iii. p. 163).

## EMPEROR HADRIAN

The early Christians were charged with being a sect of sun-worshippers (Bonwick, Egyptian Belief, p. 283). The Emperor Hadrian could see no difference between them and the followers of the ancient Egyptian god Serapis, who was the Sun. In a letter to the Consul Servianus, the Emperor says: "There are there [in Egypt] Christians who worship Serapis and devoted to Serapis are those who call themselves 'Bishops of Christ'" (Giles, Hebrew and Christian Records, vol. ii. p. 86. London: 1877).

Now lets return to where we left off.





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**Luke 21:12-36**

*12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls. 20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. 29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (KJV)*



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## THE NON-MESSIANIC GENEALOGY OF JESUS

According to the Jewish Bible, one of the requirements for the messiah is that he must be a descendant of King David. All of the major Messianic prophecies indicate this (Ezekiel 34:23, 37:21-28; Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5, 30:7-10, 33:14-16; and Hosea 3:4-5).

In Jeremiah chapter 33, verse 17, G-d says that the royal House of David will never lack a **man** to sit on the throne of Israel. The Christian Bible, recognizing this vital requirement, spends almost two chapters to establish the genealogical record of Jesus as going back to King David.

**Answer for yourself:** Do the genealogies in the New Testament prove that Jesus can be connected to King David and thus give evidence toward his "Messiahship?"

However, when the genealogical records, as recorded by Matthew and Luke are examined, critical problems are revealed.

### ACCORDING TO THE WRITER OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

In the gospel of Matthew, the genealogy of Joseph, who was the husband of Mary, is traced back to King David. However, Matthew then shoots himself in the foot by claiming that Joseph was never the father of Jesus. He does this in order to establish his claim that Jesus did not have a normal birth. His claim is that Jesus was the product of a miraculous virgin birth; that Mary never had sexual relations with her husband Joseph, and that Jesus was conceived through the "Holy Spirit." Therefore, since the genealogy as recorded in Matthew only traces Joseph back to King David, but never connects Joseph as the father of Jesus, it is clear that Jesus has no established genealogical record going back to King David.

Christian apologists answer that, even though Joseph wasn't the biological father of Jesus, he was the legal father, and, therefore, passed on his genealogical line through adoption.

There are several problems with this answer.

First of all, there is no indication from any of the records in the Christian Bible that Joseph actually adopted Jesus. However, even if a case for his adoption could be made, it is absolutely impossible to pass on one's genealogy through adoption.

For example, a priest (Kohain) is someone who is born to another priest. If your father is a priest, then you are a priest. If a priest (Kohain) adopts a boy who is the son of someone who was not a priest, that child does not become a priest through adoption.

An additional problem still remains, even if one would want to conclude that, through adoption the genealogy is



adopted as well. We find that when Matthew traces the genealogical line of Joseph back to King David, this line goes through a King named Jeconiah (also known as Coniah or Yehoaikin). The problem arises in Jeremiah, chapter 22, verse 30, when the ancestor of Joseph named King Jeconiah was cursed by G-d:

*"Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days. For no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah."*

We see from this passage in Jeremiah that any descendant of Jeconiah would be disqualified from ever being a Messianic candidate; and therefore, if Christians insist upon making Jesus the legal adopted child of Joseph, then it is obvious that Jesus would be disqualified from even potentially being the messiah.

**Answer for yourself:** Now, having seen these problems can you say that the Gospel of Matthew's genealogical record of Jesus proves anything? If anything, it casts doubt on his "Messianic link."

## ACCORDING TO THE WRITER OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

In order to answer this difficult problem, Christian apologists claim that Jesus also traces himself back to King David through his mother, Mary. This claim is made relative to the genealogy recorded in the third chapter of the book of Luke, which is also traced back to King David.

There are also a number of problems with this claim.

First and foremost, there is no evidence at all that the genealogy listed in Luke is that of Mary. The chapter clearly says that this is the genealogy of Joseph. Mary isn't even mentioned. In an article written by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, and circulated by "Jews for Jesus," the author makes the following claim:

*"In the Greek text of Luke's genealogy, every single name mentioned has the Greek definite article 'the' with one exception: the name of Joseph (Luke 3:23). Someone reading the original would understand by the missing definite article from Joseph's name that this was not really Joseph's genealogy, but his wife Miriam's (Mary)."*

David L. Blank, Professor of Classic Languages at The University of California-Los Angeles, made the following observations about the above comments:

*"According to the Greek original, Eli is indeed the father of Joseph. There is a definite article before each name, except that of Joseph, and that definite article is in each case the masculine genitive singular article -- you. Not only does this not clearly indicate that Joseph is skipped in the genealogy, it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be taken as so indicated. The author's comments on the Greek grammar of the passage are absurd and manifest an appalling ignorance of the facts of Greek syntax."*

Other Greek scholars agree with Professor Blank.

And, even if Mary could trace herself back to King David, it still wouldn't help Jesus. According to the Torah, the mother (the matrilineal) determines if someone is Jewish (Deuteronomy 7:3-4), but tribal affiliation and family genealogy can only be traced through the person's father (the patrilineal in accordance with Exodus 28:4, 29:9-30, 30:30, and 40:15 [Priesthood Lineage]; Numbers 36 [Tribal Lineage]; Genesis 49:10, I Kings 11:4, and I Chronicles 17:11-19 [Kingship Lineage]).

For instance, in Numbers, chapter 1, verse 18, we're told that the Jewish people declare their pedigrees according to their fathers' houses. When Queen Athaliah wanted to eliminate the Royal Line of David, she only killed the males knowing full well that a female descendant of David couldn't pass on the right to the throne (II

Kings 11; II Chronicles 22).

The fact that the daughters of Zelophchad inherited their father's property (Numbers 27) doesn't prove that genealogy can be passed through the daughters. This is born out by Numbers 36, where they are told that they must marry someone from their father's tribe, otherwise the inheritance would pass out of their family.

**Finally, a Third problem presents itself.**

Even if it could be maintained that a family line could be passed on through the mother, **Mary herself was not from a legitimate messianic family. According to the Bible, the messiah must be a descendant of King David through his son Solomon (II Samuel 7:12-13; I Chronicles 17:11-14, 22:10, 28:4-7).**

It's glaring that in the book of Matthew, the genealogy of Joseph is traced back to King David through his son Solomon, but ultimately down to the cursed King Jeconiah. **However, in the book of Luke, the genealogy goes from David, not through his son Solomon, but through his son Nathan. The problem is that even if one wants to maintain that the book of Luke is tracing the genealogy of Mary and that it's possible to pass on genealogical lineage through the mother, Mary would still not be of help to Jesus, because her line does not go back to David through the King's son, Solomon.**

**Answer for yourself:** How does the Holy Spirit, who is supposed to have "inspired" these writers make so many mistakes; not just simple ones, but ones that betray they have little or no knowledge of Judaism (and yet we are supposed to believe these documents were written by Jews, Apostles no less?

## **DOES WHAT THE JEWISH BIBLE SAYS "MATTER?"**

We at Bet Emet have demonstrated beyond any doubt over the years that the Jewish prophecies contained in the Jewish Bible were not fulfilled in the first century; by Jesus or by anyone. This fact is unknown to most Christians because they have a terrible lack of understanding of the Old Testament thanks to the Church who considers such a document as "superceded" by the New Testament. As if that is not enough, when such Christians read their New Testament they find on page after page references to "thus being fulfilled" and they are mistakenly led to believe what they are reading is "Jewish prophecy fulfilled by the Messiah." Thus they make the connection with Jesus being the Messiah. The truth of the matter is that we just don't know for sure since the "REAL PROPHECIES" in the Jewish Bible were not fulfilled, and remain today unfulfilled. That being the case the writers of these two Gospels wrote for the Jews and non-Jews of their day who had doubts concerning the identity of the Messiah. To help deal with such doubts a "concocted genealogy" was created whereby they could pass off Jesus as the intended fulfillment of the Messianic promises. We must remember that they had "hoped" that it would be he, but in the wake of the terrible repercussions that followed his death by Rome, and in the absence of any of the Messianic promises being fulfilled, they were left only with hope and faith that the Messiah would yet come (or return). The Essene's teaching of the return of their Teacher of Righteousness played well in igniting the hopes that this "returning redeemer" might yet come. Many hoped and believed it might be Jesus no less.

What you, the Christian believer, should want to know is the facts and the truth; no matter what it is. As it stood then, and as it stands now, Jesus failed to fulfill any of the major messianic prophecies; he was never anointed as King, he never ruled Israel, and the world was certainly not perfected in his time. In addition, he was not preceded by the return of the prophet Elijah (Malachi 4:5). Finally, he was disqualified from ever being a messianic candidate due to his lack of the necessary family background (if we are to believe these Gospel accounts are "true").

The Jewish people never rejected Jesus. He just never measured up to the description that G-d gave to the Jewish people, of who the messiah would be. Yet take heart, as we at Bet Emet have shown, that the failure of the prophecies to be fulfilled was not the failure of Jesus or any other "messenger" from G-d. The failure must



be laid upon a people who refused to "turn their hearts back to their fathers." Repentance was for someone else, and that being the case, the necessary requirements for the manifestation of the Kingdom and her King went lacking. Any Messiah "in the wings" would not be brought forth from G-d. Thus we look back at history today and know two things:

- **The Messianic prophecies were not fulfilled**
- **The identity of the Messiah, if he lived in the first century, cannot be fully maintained with any certainty without some measure of doubt**

We are left with inaccurate texts passed off as the truth and we call it "the New Testament" and such errors, when believed without question, ensures the deception and error of tens of millions. You are confronted with a choice: you can believe what G-d said when he promised the Jewish people a messiah from the House of David through Solomon his son, or you can decide that G-d was lying when He made these vital promises and believe the writer of the Gospel of Luke. But you cannot have both!

We aren't talking about a crisis in faith, but, rather, a search for the truth.

**Answer for yourself:** Do you have the courage to make that search, or even continue it?



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- [Sin The Hebrew Scriptures Says "Young Woman" And Not "Virgin"...How Did We Get It Wrong In The New Testament?](#)
- [Problems About And Surrounding The Virgin Birth Of Jesus](#)
- [Born Of A Virgin? Fulfilled Or Unfulfilled?](#)
- [The Virgin Birth Was Not Taught By The Early Church](#)
- [The Virgin Birth Was Taught "After The Fact"](#)
- [A Virgin Shall Conceive...Oh Really Now?](#)
- [The Virgin Birth And Rabbinical Commentary On Isa. 7:14](#)
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# ISAIAH 56...GOING BEYOND THE LAWS OF NOAH CHOOSING THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE GOD...BUT ARE WE?

Often I am asked why as a Christian I keep the Biblical Festivals and the weekly Sabbath. The reason is so simple once you read and correctly understand the whole Bible.

First as Christians we must become aware of the Laws of Noah and the Covenant of Noah as referred to in Acts 15.

This Covenant of Noah is referred to in Acts 15 by James as "necessary" for Gentiles who are becoming grafted into Israel/Church WITHOUT formal conversion to Judaism which had, up to that time, been required for ANY fellowship between Gentiles and Jews religiously, etc. Due to bigotry and hatred by Jews toward Gentiles in the first century, the Jews had enforced and put upon Gentiles what God never did.....the requirement to keep the laws of God which had never been given to them as a people....such as circumcision. Such approach to the non-Jews by bigoted Jewry of the first century was intended to keep the Gentiles separate from the Jews. Circumcision often, for an adult male, meant death due to infection and disease in the first century and this was an effective way to keep these “dogs” as arms length. It worked. God wanted to change this and did so through the effective ministry of the followers of Jesus as seen in the Acts 15 account and the epistle of Galatians. Sadly Christians today when reading Paul (Galatians for example) fail to understand when he says “you are not under the Law” he only is referring to the major issue of circumcision. Such is the ignorance that goes with the lack of sufficient study of the our faith as followers of Jesus.

## THE G-DFEARERS....NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS IN GOD

There is a term often overlooked in the New Testament which is of major importance for correct interpretation of the requirements of Gentile believers before God....namely the term "Godfearers." These were Gentiles without circumcision who according to Acts 10:35 are accepted with God...but unfortunately were not accepted among Jews. So you have the background for what comes next.

As James tells us in Acts 15 these 4 of the 7 listed Laws of Noah (containing 66 subsets) were necessary for Gentiles...to be part of Jesus' church (notice that he said this after the cross)!

*Acts 15:28-29 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things [referring to the Covenant and Laws of Noah]; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Since Acts 15 followed the death of Jesus then I have to ask you: "What has changed since the cross" when James made his decision as being "necessary" and "which seemed good to the Holy Spirit?"

**NOTHING!**

**Answer for yourself:** If adherence to the Laws of Noah were necessary and seemed good to the Holy Spirit for Gentile believers coming to God through Christ and his ministry through his followers then.....what about now?

**Let me remind you that nothing has changed since the crucifixion and this event in Acts occurred over 20 years after the death and resurrection of Yeshua.** Then James says in this recorded event (remember over 20 years after the cross)... **"as Moses is taught in the Synagogue every Sabbath"** thus implying that Gentiles who are turning from idols to serve the living God begin their repentance since coming to God with adherence to the Laws of Noah as the **"minimum required"** and then were instructed in **fulfilling Isaiah 56** where is it recorded for us that Gentiles are to learn to **"choose those things that please God from His Torah which go beyond the minimum [as Moses is taught in the Synagogue every Sabbath]."**

Understand that not all the Law (613 commandments) are applicable for Gentiles and they never were commanded by God to fulfill or obey all 613. Basically they were given 66 within the Covenant of Noah. The joy comes when you understand that **you don't have to do [observe] more, but you get to. Such is the demonstration of your love for God who saves you].**

## **ISA. 56..AND GOING BEYOND THE MINIMUM**

### **Isa 56:1-6**

- **1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.**
- **2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.**
- **3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree (understand here that we are NOT to be separated from the Israel of God as non-Jewish believers).**
- **4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs [Eunuch are non-Jews] that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant (notice that non-Jews kept God's Sabbaths [plural...including festivals and weekly sabbaths and took hold of God covenant with Israel and acquired more mitzvoth and commandments):**
- **5 Even unto them [speaking of the non-Jew] will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.**
- **6 Also the sons of the stranger (again referring to non-Jews), that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;**

***This passage is extremely important for the Christian today for although the Sabbath and Festival commandments were not required for Gentiles in the Laws of Noah (yet it can be shown for example that Abraham knew and***



*observed the Passover for instance), it is implied in Isa 56 and Acts 15 that Gentiles would meet on the Sabbath for instruction in God's Commandments where they could learn and then apply other Sabbaths (festivals) and Commandments to their lives, thus pleasing God, for how can we say we love Yeshua or the Father unless we obey them?*

If one undertakes a serious study of their faith (Christianity) it can be shown, that although not commanded of non-Jews, Abraham and others can be found keeping them. This love for God is demonstrated in their willingness to do what pleases God. It is our hope the same spirit be upon you. But if you are a typical denominational or non-denominational Christian today your experience is anything but the above. You have for your authority a book called the New Testament which in places calls such obedience to these Laws and Commandments a curse and if that was not enough you Church calendar is filled with pagan solar and astral days which have been made to look as if Jesus has something to do with such idolatry.

*Hosea 4:6 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. (KJV)*

**Answer for yourself:** Is God serious in the above passage and could this ever happen to you once you die and then find out that your "experience" was wrong and that just a little study on your part would have shown the folly of many things in your "Christian experience?"

## WHY HAS NOT YOUR PASTOR TAUGHT YOU THESE THINGS?

Lets look at just one example of "choosing those things that please God" which the New Testament can be shown to teach; but the key is recognizing them and this is almost impossible without a background in Judaism and Jewish Roots of Christianity.

Also in Acts 20:8 is recorded that "there were many lights in the upper chamber." Most of us have read this passage over and over our whole lives and just pass right over it moving on to the next passage. For your information this passage is recording for us the Havdalah worship service which is a religious service that ends the Sabbath on Saturday evenings at sunset; thereby .separating the Sabbath Holy Day from secular days. The Fourth Commandment is:

*Exod 20:8-11 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (KJV)*

## PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION

Notice that in Troas, a Greek city, the Apostle Paul is teaching Gentiles to observe Havdalah on the Sabbath evening. In other words followers of Jesus, in fulfillment of the Great Commission were

observing the Sabbath on Friday evening to Saturday evening long after Jesus' death and resurrection. Gentile believers were keeping the Sabbath and not Sunday. Rome will change this with Constantine and since then followers of Jesus have disobeyed the Sabbath and kept days set aside for sun-worship instead. Neglect of the sabbath and sanctification of pagan holy days is considered idolatry and this is where the vast majority of good Christian people find themselves today; most never find out until they die. Needless to say the experience of the non-Jewish believers in Troas is NOT the experience of most Christians. Why not?

Repeatedly in Paul's trips he entered the synagogue as was his custom, and it was in these Greek cities that Gentiles were attending "church" on the Sabbath. With just a little study you would find out that the early church knew what we do not: namely that Yeshua was crucified on Wednesday afternoon and raised at the end of Friday evening (at the beginning of the Sabbath which is a picture of the world to come where believers in God realize Eternal Life where there is not more death...figures does it not): So much for Catholic tradition and Good Friday when it was Good Wednesday (ha ha)!

*It would be many years after Yeshua's death before Gentiles would later take control of Christianity and change the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday.*

Let us look at another example.

In 1st Cor 11:2 Paul thanks the Gentiles in Corinth for "remembering him in all ways and KEEPING the ordinances." The root word for "ordinances" when traced to the Greek and Hebrew will refer to "divine appointed times"...festivals and Sabbaths.

**Answer for yourself:** Have you forgotten that Isa. 56 spoke of this very thing regarding non-Jews who come to God were allowed to keep such Festivals and Sabbaths so that would not be separated from God people (the Jews)? I hope not because what follows next is another example of the New Testament rightly "divided" where we see such things again taught to non-Jews in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Again in Corinthians Paul admonishes Gentiles to "keep the feast" [Passover] because Yeshua was killed on that day.

It is not my intention at this point to embark on who and why the meaning of Jesus' death was changed later by some who deviated from normative Judaism but let me say that Jesus'/Yeshua's death was the catalyst that generated from a Gentile hating Judaism a movement into all the world whereby God's Covenant and Commandments were taken in the Great Commission in the form of the Laws of Noah whereby non-Jews would learn and turn from idolatry to the living God. Had Jesus not died then this momentous event mostly likely would never have happened and the world as we know it would have been vastly different and the Judeo-Christian ethic would be absent from this planet today. Contrary to what most Gentile Christian believers understand today regarding this "Passover" passage of Paul in contemporary Christianity, one should understand that it was through Jesus' death that the salvation of the non-Jew was accomplished because it would be from this ministry that would begin after his death that would come a movement which would go into all the world and take to the non-Jews the Covenants of God and the path for non-Jews to come to the saving knowledge of God. This is the historical understanding of the passages that relate to how the death of Jesus saved the non-Jew. His "blood" was simply a metaphor for his death and his death accomplished what Israel was failing to do at the time, namely, not being a priest to the nations and not bringing their non-Jewish brothers to God. Jesus' death did this through the missionizing of the world by his followers. So, again, metaphorically, you can understand how non-Jews were saved by Jesus' blood (or should I say death). Many will dispute this and claim literally that the "blood" saves but this only betrays they lack of adequate



understanding on how the sacrificial system worked. If only one looks to Lev. 17 where it says:

**Lev 17:11**

*11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

Look at the subject of the sentence. I defy anyone to tell me that the subject accomplishing the action (atonement) is not the word "life" and not "blood." The word "blood" is the **object of the preposition in the sentence**. This realization many years ago awoke me to serious study into the dynamics of the sacrificial system where I surprisingly learned that I had been taught it 100% incorrectly by the Christian Church as well as my pseudo-professional teachers. It is time we learn the truth about Jewish things from Jews who KNOW and literally know Jesus better than Christians (such irony).

Returning to Paul:

1st Corinthians chapter 16:2 states:

**1 Cor 16:2**

*2 (Speaking to non-Jews in Corinth...a Gentile city)...Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

One should note that **"day" in most Bibles is in italics** and this means it was **"added" to the text by the Bible society which printed the Bible**. In reality it is saying, by interpretation, **"on the first of the week" or "as the week was dawning."** This refers to the time period when the first of the week was beginning to dawn **(in Hebrew time the day begins at evening and end in the morning the first day)**.

*So again reference is again made to a Havdalah service on Saturday evening for non-Jewish believers in Corinth...thus concluding the Sabbath just before the beginning of our Sunday which, according to Jewish time, begins at 6:01 P.M. in the evening.*

Also another example:

In I Corinthians 10:16 it is recorded: is this not the **"cup of blessing"** which refers to the **ONLY** cup of the Passover Seder...other than Elijah's cup at the end of the **Seder**, which again shows us a **picture of Gentiles keeping Passover and the Sabbath**.

I could go on and on but by now you get the point I hope...we don't have to keep Sabbath....but if it is recorded that Gentiles doing so pleases God in Isa 56..."who keep my Sabbaths...[referring to Feasts and Weekly Sabbaths]" ..then what kind of follower of Jesus are we when we choose not to do things knowingly when they please God?

To top this off understand that non-Jewish believers were taught these things by Israel until early in the 4th century when Constantine and Rome would create an official state religion which would destroy the existing "faith once given to the saints...both Jew and non-Jew; and out jumped the golden calf of Gentile Roman Christianity which would lead

**the way to the official recognition and production of the New Testament some 70 plus years later."**

We at Bet Emet Ministries are dedicated to instructing Gentile believers [Christians] in returning to the hidden truths of the Bible. Today in English we miss so much since few have the skills to rightly interpret this Bible correctly (historically, linguistically, culturally, politically, etc). By God's calling and grace we have been shown these truths which have caused us to repent from the errors in our religious belief system...such errors caused us to have a life-style that was less than pleasing to God in many areas...and this was do the fact that we lacked only knowledge (the Bible says 'my people perish because of a lack of knowledge).

Please understand that these few examples which I have shared is just the tip of the iceberg for Christians. Our texts are full of errors in key places where the crafters of our New Testament took great pains to make sure the Gentile readers would not see nor understand the Jewish Roots of their faith; such was Rome's ploy in creating this New Testament in the first place. I have only touched on just a few examples in this article but please understand that such errors of omission involve other important areas of our faith as well: atonement, Christology, Messianism, Covenants, etc. If you are a serious student or desire to be then our websites can be of great value to you in your desire to learn the truth and ultimately be able to discern the shaft from the wheat in Gentile Christianity.

**I hope this has opened your heart and eyes...and given you a desire to learn how you can live a life more pleasing to God.** If we can be of further assistance to you in sharing our many teachings and newsletters...please let me know and I will include you on our mailings. Watch for our Web Sites. May God bless you and may He cause you to walk in His statutes...shalom!





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## THE ESSENES....AS TAKEN FROM THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

First, let us begin with a small commentary before we get to the article from the Catholic Encyclopedia.

The following excerpt is taken from the Catholic Encyclopedia concerning the religious body called the "Essenes." What one is to take notice at this early stage of our study is the below notation in "red" signifying that there existed among the Essenes a strong link with Sun-worship which the Tanakh teaches us amounts to false worship and idolatry. Sadly it is this Essenic view of the Jewish Messiah as applied to Jesus we find in the writings comprising the New Testament which were later picked up by the Early Church Fathers which were taught by these Essenes in Alexandria, Egypt! One misses this fact concerning the Essenes when only reading Josephus, Pliny, and Philo who offer us so little about the Essenes. The key to understanding the Essenes and their religious doctrines and dogmas is this very fact so often overlooked by the vast majority of scholars today; namely, that the Essenes of the first century were a far-cry "theologically" from what they had been 200 years previously. No longer were they a separatist groups intent on purifying Judaism and restoring proper worship to the nation, but they had progressed and evolved away from such religious beliefs and had more in common with Sun-worship in the first century than normative Judaism.

## ESSENES....AS TAKEN FROM THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

"One of three leading Jewish sects mentioned by Josephus as flourishing in the second century B.C., the others being the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Concerning their origin, history, and tenets there has been much inconclusive controversy. The only ancient authorities we have are a few paragraphs in Philo Judeaeus, a somewhat lengthier description in Josephus, and a scanty notice in Pliny. The following synopsis is derived mainly from the first two. They are styled Essæi by Philo, who derives it from hosios, "holy", and Essæi and Esseni by Josephus. Their numbers according to both authors was about 4000 and their chief place of residence along the west side, but away from the shore, of the Dead Sea. They also dwelt in other, but mostly secluded, parts and small towns of Palestine; yet some were found in cities. The sect arose about 150 B.C. (the first-named Essene is Judas, 110 B.C.) and disappeared towards the end of the first century A.D. They worshipped one God, Creator and Ruler of all things, omnipotent and omniscient. Moses was held in very high esteem and to blaspheme his name meant death. The sun was held in such reverence as to awaken a suspicion of idolatry."

## TIME FOR MORE COMMENTARY

It is important that we take note of what is recorded immediately above in the "red." Reference is made to the fact that the Essenes were involved in a type of idolatry that involved the sun. The reference to Sun-Worship is rather astounding as most current references to the Essenes omit this very important fact. Many of the doctrines espoused by the Essenes are taken only at face value and

termed "Messianic" or "Christological" by those who fail to recognize the fact that such religious doctrines are little more than personification of Sun-Worship on behalf of the Essenes. Thankfully such critical understanding of the Essenes has not been overlooked by all and it is our intention at Bet Emet Ministries to help the typical believer and Christian become familiar with such information in hopes he can come to an adequate understanding of such idolatrous doctrines that pass today for Christian "orthodoxy." Now I continue with the Catholic Encyclopedia and their article on the Essenes.

## THE ESSENE ARTICLE CONTINUED....

"An all-disposing Fate was admitted, yet free will, apparently, was not denied. They refused to join in the Temple sacrifices through fear of pollution, though they sent gifts thither; it seems that no blood-sacrifice was offered by them, as they claimed that a reverent mind was the best offering to God. The Sabbath was observed with the most rigorous exactitude, not even the calls of nature being answered. Assembled in their meeting-places, where they sat according to seniority, the scripture was read and explained, generally in an allegorical manner, by some wise member. They washed frequently, as extreme importance was attached to ceremonial purity, and they followed scrupulously the prescriptions against Levitical defilements; even for a junior to touch a senior was pollution for the latter. What their esoteric doctrines were is not known. Death was welcomed, as they held "that their bodies were corruptible, and the matter composing them is not lasting, but souls are immortal and live forever, and proceeding from the most subtle ether having been drawn into bodies as into prisons by some natural longing. But when they are set free from the bonds of flesh, then they rejoice as being freed from a long servitude and mount upwards. And agreeing with the opinion of the Greeks they declare that the good dwell beyond the ocean in a place which is never oppressed by snow or rainstorms or intense heat, but is always calm and refreshed by a cool breeze breathing from the ocean. To bad souls they allot a gloomy, tempestuous cave full of never-ending torments" (Jos. Bell. Jud. I, ii, 8). Some conclude from the words just quoted that the Essenes disbelieved in the resurrection of the body.

Among the virtues the Essenes cultivated especially obedience, truthfulness, continence, justice, and temperance; they paid great attention to the sick, respect to the aged, and showed marked kindness and hospitality to strangers. All men were regarded as equal, and slavery was regarded as contrary to nature. Those guilty of great crimes were punished by long exclusion or complete excommunication which, since they were not allowed to eat anything prepared by outsiders, entailed always great hardship and often death. Philosophy was rejected as useless and beyond man's capacity, but ethics was studied with zeal. They searched for medicinal remedies in nature, as they devoted special care to the sick irrespective of creed, and investigated the properties of minerals. They laid claim to magical powers and ability to predict. For the latter some cases are given by Josephus, among them that of the Essene, Manahem, who foretold Herod the Great's kingship when he was a boy without any royal prospects. All things were held in common, their very houses not being their own. They labored principally at agricultural pursuits or made farm implements or household articles, but never weapons of war, which they were not allowed to carry, except a staff for defense when travelling. Harvests and wages went to the stewards, who gave as each needed. Clothes and shoes were retained until worn out. No trading was allowed except barter. Anointing with oil was considered a defilement. Servants were forbidden as tempting men to injustice. Their rulers or presidents were elected, likewise their priests -- if they can be so called -- and their stewards. In towns an officer was appointed to look after travelling brethren. One hundred members constituted a court of justice whose unanimous decision was irrevocable. The members were divided into four classes. The daily routine is given as follows: They were up before daybreak and spoke of no profane subject before the sun, and to it they addressed a prayer as if soliciting it to rise. Each was sent then to his appointed employment at which he worked until the fifth hour, i.e., eleven o'clock, when all assembled and having bathed in water specially exorcised, and clothed themselves in white, they entered the common dining room quietly and silently. Before each of them was placed some bread and a dish of one sort of food. A priest said grace and then, but not before, they might eat. At the end of the repast prayer was again said, their white garments laid aside, and resuming their ordinary attire they worked until evening, when they supped in the same manner. At the noonday meal, which was regarded apparently as a sacrificial feast, being prepared by their priests, no stranger was admitted, but at supper it was otherwise. As they spoke only in turn and observed great



moderation in food and drink, the silence at the meals appeared to outsiders, so we are told, something very solemn and mysterious. Many of the Essenes reached a great age and they acquired such fortitude of mind and body that the worst torments inflicted on them by the Romans failed to shake their constancy and they met death with a smile.

Most of the Essenes rejected marriage, not on account of any wrong in it but because they did not trust women and desired peace and harmony. They perpetuated their sect by adopting children and admitting adults who were "wearying of battling with the rough sea of life", as Pliny says. At their coming they received an apron to wear at their ablutions, a white garment, and a little spade-like instrument with which to dig a whole and cover their excrement from the rays of the sun. For one year their temperance was tested by observing outside the community its ascetic rules. Then came a fresh trial of two years, during which they shared in the lustral rites, but not in the meals, of the initiated. If found satisfactory they were chosen full members and bound themselves to fearful oaths to honor God, observe justice, to be loyal to all, but especially to those in authority, and if ever in authority themselves not to outshine others by dress, to love truth and honesty, to conceal nothing from their fellows, and to reveal nothing to strangers, also to keep secret at all costs their books and the names of their angels. This was the only time when Essenes took oaths, their word being regarded by all as so sacred that Herod excused them from the oath of allegiance. some of them observed the same rules yet married, but merely for the order's sake, and only after three year's probation and if the woman appeared healthy and likely to bear children.

The Essenes have received attention during the last three centuries out of all proportion to their numbers, their influence upon contemporary life, or their importance as factors in religious development. This sprang from two causes, one external and the other internal. **The latter was the curious mixture of Jewish and foreign elements in their tenets and customs.** This peculiarity aroused the curiosity and exercised the ingenuity of the learned to account for the combination. That the Essenes were really Jews, though speaking very likely Greek (Jews by race, says Josephus), is admitted. their belief in one God, reverence for one God, strict observance of the Sabbath, fanatic adherence to circumcision (Hippolytus), etc., all show this; **while their attitude toward the sun, election of priests, mode of life, likened to the Pythagorean by Josephus himself, etc., seemed to show outside influence.** The source of this influence, like everything Essenic, begets controversy, but so far no one has succeeded in determining it satisfactorily. **Buddhism, Parseeism, Pythagoreanism (old, new, and Orphic) Hellenism, etc., have all had their claims put forth as one of the parents of this hybrid sect. Suffice it to say that Persian-Babylonian influence through the Captivity, and Hellenism filtering in through Alexandria and the use of the Greek tongue can amply account for foreign elements.** The contention that their elements, if divested of their Greek appearance, could be proved to have their roots in Biblical ground is not lightly to be set aside. The External cause of attention was the bias of English deists and Continental Rationalists who strove to metamorphize the **Essenes into predecessors from whom gradually and quite naturally Christians developed**; and **Freemasons pretended to find in Essenism pure Christianity**. In reference to such chimeras it is enough to say that **between Essenism and Christianity there are some points of resemblance**; it could not very well be otherwise because Essenism was Judaic in its foundation and Christianity was not destructive but progressive. On the other hand, **the differences are fundamental. That John the Baptist and Christ were Essenes are mere assumptions based on similarities which spring naturally and independently from asceticism and voluntary poverty.** So likewise the vaunted dependence between Essenism and monasticism can be resolved into necessary traits of any ascetic, communistic life (see "Wuku" in "Studien u. Mittheilungen d. Ben. Cist. ordens", 1890, I 223-30; Berlière in "Revue Bénédictine", 1891, VIII, 12-190). **"The attitude of Jesus and his disciples is altogether anti-Essenic" (Jewish Encyc.).** The strict silence about any Messiah is due partly perhaps to the secrecy of the Essenes and mainly no doubt to His rejection by their chronicler, Josephus. In fine, our present knowledge of the Essenes is slight and not at all trustworthy, as its sources are scanty, colored, and unreliable."

*Ancient authorities: Philo, Quod Omnis Probus Liber, xii, also extracts from his Apologia Jud. in Eusebius, Præp. Evang., VIII, xi; Josephus, Bell. Jud., XIII, v, 9; XV, x, 4-5; XVIII, i, 5, etc., in tr. Complete Works (Paris, 1875),*

*ed. Dindorf; Pliny, Hist. Nat. V. xvi-xvii; Hypolitus, Philosphumena (Göttingen, 1859) IX; Epiphanius, Hæreses, xix. Modern Literature. - This is very extensive. See: Lightfoot, Collosians and Philemon (London, 1884); Edershiem, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (New York, 1896), I; Riggs, Hist. of the Jew. People (New York, 1900); Morrison, The Jews under Roman Rule (New York, 1890); Oesterley and Box, The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue (New York, 1907), vi; Keim, Hist. of Jesus of Nazara (London, 1873; Prideaux, Connection of the O. and N. Test.; Carpzovius, Apparatus Hist-Crit (Leipzig, 1748), 31, 215; Schürer, A Hist. of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ (tr. Edinburgh, 1886), a full bibliography; Greitz, Gesch. d. Juden (1905), III (tr. London, 1892); Döllinger, Heidenthum u. Judenthum (1857) tr., The Gentile and the Jew (London); Ewald, Gesch, d. Volk Israel (1868), tr. Hist. of Israel (London, 1870); Krüger, Beiträge zur Hennt. d. Pharisäer u. Essener in Theol. Quart. (Tubingen, 1894); Friedländer, Zur Entstehungsgesch. d. Christenhums (Vienna, 1894; Idem, Die religiösen Bewegungen d. Judent im Zeit. Jesu (Berlin, 1905); Smith, Dict. of the Bible; Ginsburg in Dict. Christ. Biog.; Conybeare in Hast., Dict. of Bible, s. v.; Idem, Dict. of Christ and the Gospels, s. v.; König in Kirkenlex.; The Jewish Encyclopedia.*

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# THE HEBREW BEHIND THE GREEK... BEHIND THE ENGLISH CORRECTS THE VIRGIN BIRTH ACCOUNT OF JESUS

Christians have always argued for Yeshua's virgin birth, but also argue he was descended from David. This overlooks that if virgin born, Yeshua's 'father' Joseph, albeit descended from David, would have had no connection with his conception, and his only human connection would have been through/by/with Mary; however she was of the Aaronic line (ie. she was related to Elizabeth who was of this descent - Luke 1:6, 1:36). That means she was a Levite and not from Judah, thus being discredited from Davidic lineage and not capable of being a source to the Davidic throne. But Rome did not know that, and when they created the Infancy Narratives after 200 A.D. and added it to the existing documents which would later become the New Testament, the ground work was settled for saving their concepts of Gods cohabiting with women and having super-babies along with allowing for the Jeconiah's curse and still maintain links to the Jewish David. Little did they know the Old Testament, for if they did, they would have known God relented from the Jeconiah's curse because of his repentance in captivity, and no longer is Joseph prohibited from being Yeshua's human father and maintaining the throne of David. But that is a story for another day. On with this article.

**Answer for yourself:** Do you see that if Yeshua did not come from Joseph and the Davidic line, then he is disqualified from being the Messiah as the Messiah was to come from Judah, the tribe of David and not Levi, the tribe of Aaron (Mary's lineage)?

As Aaron was of the tribe of Levi, but David was of Judah, then Yeshua, if virgin born, could not therefore be of Davidic descent and could not be the messiah which demanded Davidic descent. Furthermore, this would contradict all the N.T statements that Yeshua was a descendent of David - Matt 1:1, 12:23, 15:22, Mark 10:47, Rom 1:3, Rev 5:5.

Yeshua didn't take on 'David's line' through Joseph being his 'adoptive father' as Rom 1:3 makes it quite clear that Yeshua was of David's 'seed' (semen). So there is a problem!

*Yeshua was either of David's line - but that means he wasn't virgin born (ie. Joseph having to have been responsible for his conception),*

or

*Yeshua was virgin born, but that precludes him being of the Davidic line (because only Mary was involved in his humanity and she was not of the Davidic line) - so he couldn't have been the Messiah/Christ as the N.T*

## *teaches.*

The virgin-birth story is only found in 2 of the 27 N.T writings, and in Luke, the style of writing indicates the part that relates the infancy was written quite separately (added to the existing gospels around 200 A.D.), and added to the main story that begins in 3:1 (Note how 3:1 opens as a commencement here). Even the Catholic Jerusalem Bible admits that Matt most likely had its virgin birth story added to it also. Check it out for yourself.

In fact Luke conflicts sharply with Matthew, for example:

1. Luke has the birth in the time of the governor Quirinius (2:2,3-7), while Matt has it in the time of Herod, but the rule of these two never coincided or overlapped. There is no substance in the argument that the Ramsay Inscription regarding Quirinius as *dummvir* 'proves' he was governor in Herod's time. In fact Quirinius was governor in 9 A.D., yet we are to believe that Yeshua was a baby when the census was taken. Impossible! This is problematic in that Yeshua was born according to the Roman calendar at 4 B.C. making him 12-13 years old at the time of the census. Thus we have a historical inaccuracy recorded in the infancy narrative.
2. Matthew states that the family fled from Judea immediately to Egypt (2:4-14) and stayed there; Luke has the family calmly going to Jerusalem in Judea after the birth and then up to Galilee (2:21-22,39) and omits all references to a proposed Egyptian trip.

The only reason that the writer of the Gospel of Matthew seems to have the story is because he misunderstood Isa 7:14. He read it as messianic (which it isn't) and referring to a virgin birth (which it doesn't).

**Answer for yourself:** Don't you find it rather amusing that God would choose one to write a book of scripture and in doing so chose one who would misinterpret his own Hebraic Old Testament passages which all other Jews understood quite well to mean entirely different than his interpretation? Answer this!

This is simply the story of Isaiah saying to king Ahaz that by the time that a young girl had conceived and her baby was born, the present threat from Syria would be over (7:14-17). There is nothing messianic about it at all. In this, the child was to be called Emmanuel meaning 'God with us', but the name 'Yeshua's (in fact the Greek for the Hebrew Jehoshua) means 'Yahweh is salvation', so Yeshua was therefore not called by the name Emmanuel and therefore did not fulfill this 'prophecy'; however Matt's author misunderstood this and therefore couldn't have been the apostle of that name as he was not a Palestinian Jew (nor an eyewitness as he had to use Mark to write his Gospel).

Isa 8:3-4 says how Isaiah went and then impregnated his wife and the prophecy is again made saying that before the child could even talk, Syria would be smashed by Assyria.

Therefore it appears Isa 7:14 relates to Isaiah's own wife/child and does not have any messianic connotations. In fact there is nothing miraculous in Isaiah's saying; he is only saying a woman would conceive. He does not say that a girl who would give birth would still be a virgin at/after the conception.

The author of Matthew was using the Septuagint 'LXX' - the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible compiled in the 2nd century BCE for the Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora. However, it is not a good translation in some parts, eg. in the case of Daniel, the Jews would not use it. They understood what we do not today. Namely, that the Jewish Scribes only translated the first 5 books of the LXX Septuagint and the non-Jews the rest. That means that the Greeks or Alexandrian Essenes translated Isaiah and the prophets and are responsible for the changing of the word "young woman" in the Hebrew to "virgin" in the Greek. This is a blatant mistranslation.

The Hebrew word in Isa 7:14 for the woman/'virgin' is "almah" and means NOT a virgin, but a young woman;



it is in the LXX that it is rendered 'virgin' and there is the additional fact that in the Greek the root doesn't even necessarily mean a girl who has not had sex, but "denotes fullness or the like - fully developed". The word actually used here has nothing to do with the virgin state. As the Gospel writers used the LXX, they could not have been Palestinian Jews (ie. the apostles) or they would have obviously used the Hebrew Masoretic text and not made such errors. The author of Matthew makes other errors, eg. in 27:9-10 he says he is quoting Jeremiah, but in fact he's quoting Zechariah 11:12-13.

**Answer for yourself:** Would the Holy Spirit make such a mistake if He was guiding the writing of such a document?

**Answer for yourself:** Would the Holy Spirit use such a man to write an "inspired" document who does not even know his own Bible...the Old Testament Masoretic Text and the Prophets as taken from the Jewish Masoretic text?

There are other examples of this throughout the New Testament to the discriminating reader who is well versed in the Bible, but a casual reader will overlook such discrepancies.

It is very apparent that the Gospel writers were not Palestinian Jews and in the case of Mark's author there has to be doubt whether he had even set foot in Palestine in view of the historical, chronological, geographical and theological errors he makes about first century Palestine. But this is where it continues to be manifestly absurd.

Yeshua was supposedly a true Jew - a direct descendent of Abraham through David (Matthew 1), the Son of David (Matt 21:9), the 'lion of the tribe of Judah' (Rev 5:5) and yet whenever he quoted the Old Testament, he quoted the GREEK LXX version which deviates from the Jewish Masoretic Text in hundreds of places!

*Come on now! Listen to what you are saying, even more, listen to what you are supposed to believe. The only reason we believe such stuff is that we never knew the facts as I am unfolding them to you.*

Furthermore, in some cases the Hebrew original of the LXX text he is quoting would not support the argument he is making, ie. because of the LXX's inaccuracies. In Mark 7:1-23 Yeshua does this, but although it seems the LXX would support the point Yeshua is making to the Pharisees, the Hebrew original would not.

*So we are asked to believe that Yeshua - a true Hebrew Jew - chose to use the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and furthermore, was unaware of the fact that he was using a passage that in reality was defective and the original would say something completely different, and be quite inappropriate for his argument, but also, according to the Gospels, he floored his orthodox Jewish opponents with this - a mistranslation of their own scriptures - and they didn't challenge this?*

The fact is, therefore, Yeshua could not have spoken what the Gospels reports, and such sayings are put into his mouth by the Gospel writers who being ignorant of Hebrew made their handiwork obvious.

The same applies with James (supposedly Yeshua's brother) in Acts 15 - he uses the LXX to support his argument, although again, the Hebrew original says something quite different and would not

**support his argument, and yet all the Jews in the audience didn't comment on this!**

**Answer for yourself:** So what are we to do when studying the English Bible?

## **WE MUST STUDY THE JEWISH ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY**

**Answer for yourself:** Can the teachings and nuances of first century Israel be fully understood from the perspective of twentieth century?

As far as settlement of peoples other than the American Indian, our nation is only about 220 years old. Our nation was established in 1776, a little over 200 years ago. The Americas were settled a little over 500 years ago. This gives us, at best, a historical perspective of five centuries. In the "New Testament:" we are looking at a culture half-way around the world some 2,000 years ago. This same culture started some 4,000 years before that. Continuous in the same place for about 6,000 years is a people from which our faith springs.

I will quote some statements that will clarify my position. I trust these will help you to understand why I have the interest that I have and spark some interest in you as well.

*"The Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people...he has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him...the Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound, and splendor, then faded to dream- stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed and made a vast noise, and they're gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was...all things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"- by Mark Twain*

**"To explore and understand the Jewish roots of our faith is to expand and to enrich our Christian experience. This premise is at the heart of the educational endeavors of Bet Emet Ministries, and other Messianic Ministries like it, that are restoring to the Church an appreciation of its full Hebrew heritage."**

It is my hope to assist believers in developing a deeper, more intimate relationship with God through the study of Hebrew language and culture.

The Babylonian Talmud (Sukkah 42A) states that Jewish boys were taught Deuteronomy 6:4 (Shema) as soon as they could speak. The Talmud specifies that "The father must teach him." Early sources suggest that this must have been the first portion from the Hebrew Bible that Yeshua committed to memory. We may assume that Joseph was responsible for fulfilling this task. This portion of scripture is known simply as "The Shema." In HEBREW it is...*"Shema Yisra'el Adoni Eloheynu Adoni Ehad"*...ENGLISH...**"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One."** The Shema was to be recited first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Countless martyrs through the ages have died with The Shema as the last utterance from their lips, leaving this world with the proclamation of God the last words spoken. This is an affirmation of monotheism in opposition to a polytheistic environment. The Hebrews were/are to know there is only one God, not many.

From the beginning there were only two classes of people; Jews and Gentiles, those who believed in the one true God and everyone else...who, then, are we? We believe in the one true God. This is a Hebrew concept. We are therefore no longer Gentiles, regardless of our ethnic or geographical background. We, in fact, are spiritually Jewish. We have not replaced the Jews as some would have us believe, the Jews have not passed away or become irrelevant with the advent of Yeshua. Judaism is just as valid today as it was 2,000 years ago. The vast majority of traditional or formal Jews simply do not accept Yeshua as Messiah, they are still looking for Messiah to come and establish an earthly kingdom. We are now grafted into the root of the Olive Tree, Israel, according to the eleventh chapter of Romans.



**Paul teaches us that God did not reject His people, Romans 11:1-6. The elect obtained what Israel so earnestly sought, the rest rejected it, and because of this, salvation came to the Gentiles according to verses 7-12. Paul seeks to arouse the Jews to envy and save them. Verse 16 says that "If the root is holy, so are the branches." Paul declares that the root is holy! Furthermore, he declares that the grafted in branches are holy! We are not to despise the Jews, we are to embrace them. They are our spiritual kinsmen and, as such, we have much to learn from them. We also have much to share, but it must be done in love and not from arrogance. We see that branches have been broken off and wild olive shoots are grafted in - we, Gentiles, have accepted God through the ministry of Yeshua and thereby are grafted into Judaism - we do not support the root but the root supports us! We are warned not to be arrogant for if the natural branches were not spared, neither will the grafted in branches be spared. We are part of the same tree by grace, God is also able to engraft the natural branches again if they believe (verses 17-24.) Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles have been saved (grafted in) and then all Israel will be saved. We are all candidates for mercy (verses 25-32.)**

**This is why I feel it is important to study our Jewish background. We are "grafted in Jews," [we as Christians are Israel and not Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, etc.]. We need to know who we are, where we come from and how we are to relate to our roots. Without this understanding, we can hardly expect to grasp the depth of the scripture. I would like to quote David Bivin and Roy Blizzard from their book *Understanding the Difficult Words of Yeshua*. "The writers are Hebrew, the culture is Hebrew, the religion is Hebrew, the traditions are Hebrew, and the concepts are Hebrew."**

**Answer for yourself:** If this is true, shouldn't we try to know just who the Hebrews were and are today?

**Oh, by the way, is it not interesting that when Yeshua was asked the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28-31, He answers by quoting The Shema? In other words, because God is One, then we are to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and those created in His image. So, basically, monotheism is the basic teaching of the Greatest Commandment, and loving God and His creations are how we carry it out. Shalom.**



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# SINCE THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES SAYS "YOUNG WOMAN" AND NOT "VIRGIN" HOW DID WE GET IT WRONG IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

There are a number of alleged messianic prophecies about Yeshua's birth: prophecies about the location, manner, and time of his birth, about his genealogy, and about events which were to occur at the time of his birth. Probably the most famous of these prophecies is the prophecy that Yeshua would be born of a virgin.

The virgin shall conceive idea (Matthew 1:23) comes from the Septuagint, the Ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Hebrew original is now translated as "young woman" (Isaiah 7:14, Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, Good News Bible). Isaiah 7:10 - 8:4, the passage it comes from, is about Isaiah conceiving a child by the young woman, apparently in front of witnesses, as part of a prophecy about Assyria (Isaiah 8:1-4). Little wonder that there is scepticism about the idea of the virgin birth of Yeshua.

The gospels of Matthew (1:18-25) and Luke (1:26-35) both claim that Yeshua was born of a virgin, **but only Matthew (1:23) appeals to the Hebrew scriptures as an explanation for why this should be the case.** The verse appealed to is Isaiah 7:14, which reads: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, a young woman will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel."

There are a number of difficulties with this passage. As many have noted, the Hebrew word translated as "virgin" in this verse is "almah," which is more accurately translated simply as "young woman." The Hebrew word "bethulah" means "virgin," and this word is not used in Isa. 7:14. In the book of Isaiah, "bethulah" appears four times (23:12, 37:22, 47:1, 62:5), **so its author was aware of the word and could have used it in Isa 7:14 if he so desired to convey the idea of a "virgin birth."** In the New American Standard translation of the Bible, all other appearances of "almah" are translated simply as "girl," "maid," or "maiden" (viz: Genesis 24:43, Exodus 2:8, Psalms 68:25, Proverbs 30:19, Song of Solomon 1:3, 6:8). Thus the claimed fulfillment, as found in the New Testament, adds a biologically impossible condition which is not even present in the original prophecy.

## DOES YOUR BIBLE TRANSLATE ISAIAH 7:14 CORRECTLY?

**Answer for yourself:** What does all these Christian translations of the Bible have in common?

### Revised Standard Version

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, **a young woman** shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

### Revised English Bible



Because you do, the Lord of his own accord will give you a sign; it is this: A young woman is with child, and she will give birth to a son and call him Immanuel.

### New English Bible

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: A young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel.

### New Revised Standard Version

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

### The Message of the Bible

He will give you a sign. A young woman shall bear a son who shall truly represent the hopes we have inherited from the days of David. His very name, 'G-d-is-with-us,' shall express the secret of his power.

### Good News Bible

Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.'

### New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (Jehovah Witnesses)

Therefore Jehovah himself will give you men a sign: Look! The maiden herself will actually become pregnant, and she is giving birth to a son, and she will certainly call his name Immanuel.

### The Jerusalem Bible: Readers Edition

The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.

### The Bible: A New Translation

An omen you shall have, and that from the Eternal himself. There is a young woman with child, who shall bear a son and call his name

### The International Critical Commentary

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a damsel is with child, and shall bring forth a son, and call his name Immanuel.

### The Layman's Bible Commentary

In reply, Isaiah says that the Lord will provide a sign. It will be a most unusual and remarkable event. A young woman shall bear a son and name him "Immanuel," meaning "G-d is with us."

### The Bible: An American Translation

since the hebrew scriptures says "young woman" and not "virgin" how did we get it wrong in the new testament?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold! a young woman is with child, and is about to bear a son; and she will call him 'G-d is with us.'

### **The New Jerusalem Bible**

The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is this: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.

### **World Biblical Commentary**

Therefore my Lord himself will give you (pi)a sign. Behold, the woman shall conceive and bearing a son -she shall call his name Immanuel."

*Well I hope you got it, but if you didn't let me help you. None of these translations render the word "almah" [young woman in Hebrew] as "virgin." Each of these translations translated Isa. 7:14 CORRECTLY!*

**Answer for yourself:** Then why does the quote from this passage in Matthew 1:20-23 not say "young woman" and says "virgin" instead?

## **WHAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE OF THESE TRANSLATIONS?**

If you don't have access to one of these translations, and are not familiar with Hebrew of the original passage from which the New Testament quotes from, then this is what you would read in the New Testament which is based off a faulty interpretation of Isa. 7:14:

### **Matthew 1:20-23**

(20) But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying Joseph, thou son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) And she will bear a son; and you shall call his name Yeshua, for it is he who will save his people from their sins." (22) Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, (23) "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, a they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, G-d is with us."

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice a difference; namely that the quote of Isa. 7:14 as taken from the Old Testament and the Masoretic Text, does not say the same in the New Testament as it does in the Old Testament? Why not?

**Answer for yourself:** What is the Masoretic Text of OT?

This is the Hebrew text of the Old Testament as it was translated by the Masoretes who lived around 750-1000 C.E. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars. They had two different schools, Tiberian and Babylonian, and the Tiberian translation of the Old Testament is used in today's Hebrew Bibles.

You should be very curious at this point as you try to understand how "young woman" in the Hebrew as defined by "almah" in Hebrew came to mean "virgin" in the Greek as defined by "parthenos"

and later in the English translations of the New Testament since the original from which it was taken does not convey such an idea.



## LET US EXAMINE THE ORIGINAL MASORETIC TEXT OF ISAIAH 7:1-7, 10-16...THE BIBLE YESHUA READ

1. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, marched on Jerusalem to wage war against it, and he could not war against it. 2. And it was told to the House of David, saying, "Aram has allied itself with Ephraim," and his heart and the heart of his people trembled as the trees of the forest tread because of the wind. 3. And the Lord said to Isaiah, "Now go out toward Ahaz, you and Shear-Yasb your son to the edge of the conduit of the upper pool, to the road of the washer's field. 4. And you say to him, "Feel secure and calm yourself, do not fear, and let your heart not be faint because of the two smoking stubs of firebrands, because of the raging anger of Rizin and Aram and the son of Remaliah 5. Since Aram planned harm to you, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying: C. 'Let us go up again Judah and provoke it, and annex it to us; and let us crown a king in its midst, one who is good for us.' 7. So said the Lord G-d, 'Neither shall it succeed, nor shall it come to pass...' 10. And the Lord continue to speak to Ahaz, saying, 11. "Ask for yourself a sign from the Lord, your G-d; ask it either in the depth or in the heights above." 12. And Ahaz said, "I will not ask and I will not test the Lord." 13. And he said, "Listen now, O House of David, is it little for you to weary men, that you weary my G-d as well? **14 Therefore the Lord, of His own, shall give you a sign; behold the young woman is with child, and she shall bear a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel.** 15. Cream and honey he shall eat when he knows to reject bad and choose good. 16. For, when the lad does not yet know to reject bad and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread, shall be abandoned."

**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that the Masoretic Text of Isaiah 7:14 agreed with the Christian versions of the same passage given at the beginning of this article?

**Answer for yourself:** So How Did We Go From "Young Woman" in the Old Testament to "Virgin" in the New Testament in quoting the same verse?

Simply the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures chose another word in place of "almah-young woman" which conveyed a completely different idea..."parthenos-virgin."

**Answer for yourself:** But does "parthenos" always convey the idea of a virgin birth every time it is used?

## IS "PARTHENOS" ALWAYS USED FOR A VIRGIN? NO

**An example of the word "Parthenos" as used in the Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures...called the Septuagint.. where the person it is referring to is clearly not a virgin:**

Genesis 34:2-4 (King James)

And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul cave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved *the damsel* (Septuagint..parthenon) and spake kindly unto the damsel (Sept...parthenon). And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

As you can see for yourself, after Dinah had slept with Shechem and was no longer a virgin, she is referred to as "parthenon" in the Greek translation of the Hebrew passage. Yet at this time she is no longer a virgin. Since describing her as "parthenon" and since she is definitely in a non-virginous condition, to force the meaning of the word "parthenon" to mean "virgin" as it is done in translating Isa. 7:14 is wrong and can be easily shown to be an arbitrary decision of the Gentile Greek translators based upon their existing theology and religious belief system at the time.

Thus, but its own admission in the Genesis 34:2-4 passage, the Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible (the

Septuagint LXX) uses the same word used in translating Isaiah 7:14 (which is correctly recorded for us as “a young woman” in Isa. 7:14) in a way in Genesis 34:2-4 which does not mean “virgin” at all, but rather meaning one who has previously had intercourse. Thus to use the same word to mean “non-virgin” in Gen. 34:2-4 and later to mean “virgin” in Isa. 7:14 breaks the laws of Biblical Interpretation. Clearly the decision to used a definition foreign to the original interpretation of the word as seen in its “first use” in Genesis 34:2-4 is nothing but an arbitrary decision on the part of the translators due to their religious bias and previously head religious belief system. Such an interpretation on their part does injustice to the original concept from which they translated, because “ha almah” in Hebrew meant “a young women” and not necessarily a “virgin” as we are erroneously led to believe by the translators of the Greek Scriptures.

## THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE BIBLE TELLS THE TRUTH

Isaiah's intent in discussing this child is clearly to set a time frame for the destruction of Israel. There is nothing miraculous about the mother or the conception process. The Hebrew word used *alma*, means simply "young woman," without any implication of virginity. The Greek word *parthenos* used to translate *alma* can mean either a young woman or a virgin. What we as Christians need to understand is that Matthew (or the writer of Gospel of Matthew who was other than the Apostle) used a Greek Bible, so he naturally reinterpreted Isaiah 7:14 as a prophecy referring to the virgin birth of Yeshua. For the evangelist, Isaiah's original meaning was superseded by the identification of Yeshua as Immanuel (Grk. *Emmanuouel*). [Daniel N. Schowalter, *The Oxford Companion To The Bible*. Excerpt from Virgin Birth of Christ,' New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pg. 790].

## JOSEPHUS INFORMS US THAT THE JEWISH INTERPRETERS OF THE SEPTUAGINT ONLY TRANSLATED THE LAW OF MOSES...5 BOOKS ...THE REST WAS DONE BY GENTILES...NO WONDER THE MISTAKES ABOUND

“I found, therefore, that the second of the Ptolemies was a king who was extraordinarily diligent in what concerned learning and the collection of books; that he was also peculiarly ambitious to procure a translation of our law...into the Greek tongue...for he did not obtain all our writings at that time; but those who were sent to Alexandria as interpreters gave him only the books of the law, while there were a vast number of other matters in our sacred books. [Josephus, Preface To Antiquities, Section 3].

You may have not noticed, but this often overlooked piece of information is of tremendous importance. For years in debates with other Christians, they have reasoned that the Rabbis translated the “whole” of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, thus meaning that they were responsible for the Isaiah translation of “virgin” as in the Septuagint. Now we see for sure that they only translated the first five books of Moses, and were not responsible for the rest. Now it is rather easy to see how the early Essenes, who were involved in sun-worship in Alexandria, Egypt, would translate as virgin...since all the sun-g-dmen were born of virgins. It is time to study these subjects out to see how the Jewish Masoretic text was corrupted by them and how many succeeding theological doctrines cherished and held today by Christians are pagan to the core. They Essenes of Alexandria, to provide clout to their theological positions, produced a translation of the Jewish Scriptures that the Jews of Palestine could not accept, but which yet gave them authority in Alexandria among the other theological sects which they competed with for authority.

Shalom.





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## PROBLEMS ABOUT AND SURROUNDING THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS

The Virgin Birth is among those concepts that are crucial to an adequate understanding of Christianity, one of the stones in the ideological foundation. Yet, like other stones, it is permeated with problems and contradictions that need to be exposed.

Most of the difficulties associated with the Virgin Birth arise from within the Bible itself. To begin with, several statements contend Mary was a virgin at the time of the birth and that Joseph did not have contact with her until afterwards (Luke 1:34-35, Matt. 1:24-25, 1:18, 20), while other verses say Jesus was Joseph's son (John 1:45, 6:42, Luke 2:27, 41, 4:22, Luke 2:33, 43 in NASB, Matt. 13:55, Luke 3:23). Even Mary said Joseph was the father of Jesus (Luke 2:48) and she ought to know. Several others verses show Jesus had a natural birth according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3, 9:5). It's hard to believe the birth was natural if one of the parents was an Un-natural Holy Spirit.

A second major problem connected with the Virgin Birth arises from some of the previously-mentioned verses which allege Joseph was the actual father of Jesus. According to the genealogies in the first chapter of Matthew (1-16) and the third chapter of Luke (23-31) Joseph was a descendant of David. Therefore, Jesus was a descendant of David, which is required of one claiming the Messiahship (Jer. 23:5, 2 Sam. 7:12-13, Psalms 89:3-4, 132:11). But Joseph couldn't be the father of Jesus and Jesus couldn't be of David's seed (2 Tim. 2:8, Acts 13:22-23, Rev. 22:16) "according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3, 9:5) if he emerged from a virgin birth.

*Christians must abandon one of two concepts, either the Virgin Birth or Messiahship of Jesus. They are incompatible. How could he be of David's descent "according to the flesh" if Joseph was not his physical father. A virgin birth would destroy the physical chain, the link between David and any possibility of being the Messiah of Davidic lineage.*

Apologists attempt to resolve this dilemma by alleging one of the genealogies (Luke 3) pertains to Mary not Joseph. It allegedly shows he is a physical descendant of David and since Jesus was from her flesh he is also a physical descendant of David and can claim the Messiahship. However, there are several problems with this explanation. Although Joseph was from the house of David (Luke 1:27, 2:4), Mary appears NOT to have been from the house of Judah since her cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:36) was a daughter of Aaron, i.e. from the house of Levi (Luke 1:5). Moreover, Mary's name is never mentioned in the genealogy of Luke 3 and only arises incidentally in that of Matthew 1. Both genealogies clearly pertain to Joseph. Both clearly trace the descent of Joseph not Mary. In fact, none of the genealogies in either the Old or New Testament trace the lineage of a woman. Women are never given a position of such importance in the Bible as to merit a genealogy and there is no evidence Luke 3 provides an exception. The superiority granted men

in the Bible would forestall any possibility of women being considered as equals.

A third problem arising from the birth of Jesus lies in the fact that the Bible repeatedly says nothing pure can come from woman (Job 25:4, 14:4, Job 15:14 NIV) and anyone touching a woman within seven days after she has menstruated (Lev. 15:19) is impure. Mary had to be purified (Luke 2:22-24) according to the Old Testament law (Lev. 12:8) and it's difficult to see how Jesus could have avoided touching her during these periods. Mary was under the curse of sin like all of us and thus, was no purer than anyone else. Realizing the problem an impure Mary presents, Catholics tried to resolve this difficulty by proclaiming the Immaculate Conception in 1854. They alleged that Mary herself was conceived apart from sin: she was pure. But that does not resolve the problem; it's only removed one step.

**Answer for yourself:** If this were true how could Mary's sinful parents produce a pure daughter?

**Answer for yourself:** Moreover, if Mary were sinless, like Jesus, then why would she say in Luke 1:47: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in G-d my Saviour"?

**Answer for yourself:** If Mary had been sinless, holy, and the mother of G-d, why did she need a Saviour? According to Christianity only sinners need saviours.

A fourth problem with the Virgin Birth arises from the wording of Isaiah 7:14 which supposedly prophesies the virgin birth of Jesus. According to the King James Version (KJV) the verses says: "...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and call his name Immanuel." Translators hotly debate the use of the word "virgin" which came from the Hebrew word "almah." Hebraic scholars say "almah" means a "young woman" not a virgin. They further contend that the real Hebrew word for virgin is "bethulah." They refer to Gen. 24:43 and Ex. 2:8 which show "almah" means a maid, not virgin.

**Answer for yourself:** Who knows Hebrew better, the Hebrews or the Christians, and the Hebrews say in their Masoretic text that "almah" should be translated as the young woman, not virgin?

Some scholars further allege that "shall conceive" should have been translated as "is with" child which is in the present tense and shows the prophecy pertains to a woman existing in Isaiah's time.

Other critics of Christianity's claim note that "shall conceive" was translated from "harah" which actually means "has Conceived." They say "harah" (conceived) is the Hebrew perfect tense, which represents past completed action in English.

Additional evidence that Isaiah 7:14 does not pertain to Jesus lies in the fact that Jesus was never referred to as Immanuel in the New Testament., is never called Immanuel except by those who do so in order to fulfill the prophecy, and according to Luke 1:31 was to be called Jesus, not Immanuel.

A fifth problem associated with the Virgin Birth is that some Christians allege Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus. But this couldn't have occurred unless all of Jesus' brothers and sisters were products of virgin births also. Many verses show Jesus had brothers and sisters (Matt. 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, Gal. 1:15, Luke 8:19, John 2:12, 7:3-5, 7:10, Acts 1:14), that Jesus was only the first of several offspring (Luke 2:7), and that Joseph had no contact with Mary till she had brought forth her firstborn (Matt. 1:25).

Besides these major problems, there are also several more difficulties related to the Virgin Birth.

If Joseph was the natural father of Jesus as some previously-mentioned verses allege then Jesus was illegitimate, a bastard, since Joseph and Mary were engaged, not married. Luke 2:5 proves the latter quite clearly in the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New American Standard Version (NAS), and the New International (NI) Version.

Moreover, some say that Jesus couldn't claim the throne of David. To quote the fundamentalists: "...if Jesus



had been sired by Joseph, He would not have been able to claim the legal rights to the throne of David. According to the prophecy of Jeremiah 22:28-30, there could be no king in Israel who was a Descendant of King Jeconiah, and Matthew 1:12 relates that Joseph was from the line of Jeconiah. Some say that if Jesus had been fathered by Joseph, He could not rightly inherit the throne of David, since he was a relative of the cursed line." This problem, concerning this one criticism, is answered in fact that 3 curses were put on Jeconiah...no posterity was to sit upon the throne, he was to remain childless, and poor. But history recounts his repentance in captivity and that he amassed great wealth and children while there. It seems that 2 of the 3 punishments were removed since his sincere repentance.

**Answer for yourself:** Does it not stand to right that the third was removed by G-d as well...that his descendants could again sit upon the throne of David?

Well out of all these criticisms of the Virgin-Birth position of Christian theology I can honestly say that I have only one response to the "positive," and that is the one dealing with the Jeconiah curse. Otherwise, as stated above and in the other articles in this series the evidence stands overwhelmingly opposed to any credible belief in the Virgin-Birth.



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## BORN OF A VIRGIN? FULFILLED OR UNFULFILLED?

The following passage is taken from the Christian New Testament: Matthew 1:22-1:23 (KJV)

*Now all this happened, in order that it might be fulfilled, that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "**Look! A virgin shall be with child, and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanu-El**", which being interpreted is, 'G-d is with us'.*

*Now lets read the passage in the Palestinian Text...the Jewish Masoretic Text...the acutal Hebrew text...Tanakh.*

*[Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore He (my Lord) shall give to you a sign. Behold! The **young woman** is with child, and shall bring forth a son and call his name "Emanu-El".]*

### ANALYSIS

*As we can see, the word "virgin" was not in the original Hebrew text.*

*The word "**HaAlmah**" (which is in the Hebrew text) means "the young woman", while the word for "virgin" is "**Besulah**".*

*The Hebrew word "HaAlmah" was purposefully mistranslated by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt, as "Besulah" in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek. We have taken pains of late to reveal to you that the Jews, contrary to false tradition, did not translate the Prophets or the Writings into Greek. The Rabbis only translated the Torah. This means that Alexandrian Jews or non-Jews translated the rest of the Jewish Scriptures into Greek much later and the Rabbis from Palestine had nothing to do with it. This explains why pagan traditions crept into the text and the translation.*

*Even so, this sentence was not speaking about the mother of **Moshiach** anyway! That's right, this is a non-Messianic verse, and being so, it is ridiculous that that is used by Christian preachers to "prove" that Jesus was **Moshiach**!*

Some preachers even claim (incorrectly) that *HaAlmah* was often used to describe virgins, and that sometimes *HaAlmah* and *Besulah* were used interchangeably. This might explain why many of them believe in the "virgin birth". After all if the "virgin" is pregnant and is still a virgin, then it would make sense that she would always be referred to as a virgin. They have said "Show us a verse in *Torah* where a mother or a wife is called *HaAlmah*." It's in this verse.



**Also, note the use of the word *hinei*, or "behold!".** This word, when used before describing a future event, often **indicates that the event will happen very soon.** So in this case, a pregnant non-virginal woman will soon be giving birth to a son. The context of the verse is the 8th century before Yeshua and to believe or stretch the time frame for the event some 800 years is not "very soon" to say the least.

**Answer for yourself:** This could not be intentional, could it? Let us look at a typical response to this mistranslating of the original text:

*"Well, when the Rabbis translated the Torah from Hebrew to Greek, it became part of the problem in the translation."*

Nice try, but it doesn't wash. First of all, as stated above, **it wasn't Jews who translated the book of Prophets (Sepher Naviim).** **Let us not forget that this prophecy is from Isaiah, the prophet! As stated the Jews did not translate the passage in Isaiah 7.**

Second, the Greek word "parthenos" (virgin) was used by Christian translators as the replacement for the Hebrew word *Almah* (young woman).

**Answer for yourself:** How did this quote get translated in the book of "Matthew" as *virgin* in every other language in the world when it remained *young woman* in the *Tanach* in it's original Hebrew form? Good question!

***It was obviously done to promote the "virgin story of pagan mythologies" of which the non-Jews of almost every nation of the world who were involved in sun-worship were already familiar***

We fail to realize the existing religious belief systems of the non-Jews to whom Paul went as well as other Gentile ambassadors of the faith in later times. **The "virgin birth" of g-dman was a cardinal doctrine to almost all the non-Jews to whom the religion of Yeshua was taken. The "virgin-birth" was an effective bridge into the world and minds of non-Jews. It was easy to sell Jesus as just another "son of G-d who was born of a virgin" to those who already had many such "virgin-born g-dmen." Jesus was presented as just another one. You need to understand that such a change to the text of the Greek Scriptures happened over 200 years before Yeshua would be born and was never changed and intended to be a prophecy for the future Jesus. The alteration was done by the Essenes of Alexandria, Egypt, in order to promote their views of the own unique "anointed avatar" sun-g-dman as against the views of other competing religious sects in Alexandria. Now the Essenes, have a "book" like the Jews, provided clout to their theological positions by altering the texts whereby their "unique solar theology" was given prophetic authority and presented as such to those of Alexandria who neither knew the truth of the Jewish Tanakh or that the texts were purposefully altered to promote the Essene position in the first place.**

We have documented this extensively on other websites: <http://essenechristianfaith.netfirms.com>

**Regardless of tradition, it is said that 71 Rabbis translated the Torah; yet it was not they who translated the sefer naviim (book of prophets)! It was the result of Essene (proto-Christians) authors who translated sefer naviim from Hebrew into the language of the pagans. When the Christian bible was translated to Latin, the mistake was intentionally kept in, even though the original Hebrew text was still available!**

**When the Christian bible was again translated into English and other languages, again, this error was kept in place.**

## SOMETHING ALL CHRISTIANS NEED TO HEAR AND REALIZE

Many Christians today are becoming honest with the text and with history. Sadly not all however. It wasn't until the early 1950's, a few versions of the Christian bible (beginning with Revised Standard Version of the Christian Bible) were changed back to "young woman," changing their Christian text to fit the Hebrew, but there are still many versions that have kept this in. Not that it matters, because *this isn't even a Messianic prophecy!* This use of the word "virgin" also become problematic for the Catholic Church, which has caused "Mother Worship" services, where the icon of Mary is prayed to in lieu of her offspring!

**Answer for yourself:** But if it wasn't Mary and Jesus, who was this passage talking about anyway?

The virgin-birth prophecy is not a messianic prophecy. If you read the entire quote, you will see that it concerns Ahaz ben Jotham of Judah at around 700 BCE. Isaiah is providing him with a prophecy. I'll paraphrase the entire section of the story in more contemporary language so that you get the gist of the context in which that passage was written. For the exact text, you can read Isaiah 7:10-7:17 for yourself.

- Ahaz: Alas! Our land is under siege. All around me are our enemies. Rezin, king of Aram is joining forces with king Pekah. What shall become of our land and our people with these Syrians coming after us? G-d has abandoned us to our enemies!
- Isaiah: Do you really want to know?
- Ahaz: I'd rather not.
- Isaiah: I will tell you anyway. G-d has not abandoned you or your people. Look at the young woman over there who is pregnant. G-d has not abandoned you, and this child will be called *Emmanu-El* because the people will see that G-d is with us. And what's more, before that child is old enough to tell the difference between good and evil, those kingdoms that you fear will have been abandoned.

**Answer for yourself:** So what discrepancies do we learn from this?

1. The child was not the focal-point of the passage, but was used as a sign.
2. The event was to happen very soon, 800 years before Jesus was even born. The word *hinei* emphasizes how soon the event will take place. Also, before the child is old enough to tell the difference between right and wrong (2-3 years), the war will have been over and the enemy cities abandoned.
3. This is not a Messianic prophecy, but one that tells Ahaz that he shall vanquish his enemies and that the war will not be a long one.
4. There is nothing virginal about this passage. The young woman needs not be a virgin to give birth to her child; one that I might add is fully human (not a g-dman as the pagans had taught for millennia...all connected with sun-worship of the non-Jewish nations). King Ahaz was a Jew and not a Gentile!
5. The message here is that when one has faith in *HaShem*, that ones enemies will fall and that ones kingdom will prosper.

## SO WHAT IS THE IDENTITY OF THE CHILD...CAN WE KNOW?

It is believed by many scholars that the woman, who stood near the king and the prophet during their conversation, was probably the wife of the king, and was giving birth to his son.

Rashi thought that the verse spoke about *Hezekiah*. When *Hezekiah* was 9 years old, his father became king over their land and the land of their enemies. *Hezekiah* was also know as the "Prince of Peace", a term that Christians have delegated to Jesus, which is an interesting "coincidence". However, Ibn Ezra refutes the idea because of the time delay involved. Notice that Isaiah 9 comes after Isaiah 7.

**Answer for yourself:** That being so is it possible that the troublesome passages in Isaiah 9 concerning a child that is born be the same child of Isaiah 7, and since Hezekiah was called "Prince of Peace," and since there is no "to be verbs" in Hebrew, then could this be strong evidence that the identity of the child in Isaiah 7 and 9 was



none other than Hezekiah? You will have to be the judge.

It doesn't matter who the child was, however. The child was not the focal point of the prophecy, but only an interesting sidebar.

***As I said before, this was not a Messianic prophecy, and it definitely had nothing to do with Jesus.***

***Since all Jews knew the above information as presented in this article, then who the heck is writing the supposed fulfilled "virgin prophecy" of Matthew? And surely G-d knew the difference, and that being so, don't try and tell me the Holy Spirit had anything to do with Matthew as we now are beginning to see the corruption of the New Testament which goes unnoticed by almost all...that is until they begin serious study. I and others have and make our results known to you.***



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## THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH WAS NOT TAUGHT BY THE EARLY CHURCH

Because the traditions of the virgin birth and the legends which venerate Mary have been so much a part of the culture and system of dogma of the church, it could logically be supposed that such traditions and stories and the doctrines which were derived from them would have been widely supported by both canonical and non-canonical literature as well as by documentary or other historical evidence. But no literature or historical records which can be dated before the end of the second century support the dogma of the virgin birth. One should not be too surprised by this. Neither of the birth traditions recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Luke are even mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament. And the doctrine of the virgin birth was not taught by the leaders of the primitive church in Jerusalem.

*There is not a single reference -- either direct or indirect -- to the virgin birth of Jesus in the entire book of Acts. It must be presumed, therefore, that the doctrine had absolutely no place in the preaching of the apostles.*

The writer whom we judged to be probably the most scholarly as well as the most able and thorough defender of the dogma of the virgin birth was J. Gresham Machen. Nevertheless, in his discussion of the relation of the birth narratives to the rest of the New Testament, he was forced to conclude: "From the foregoing review of the evidence, it appears that the virgin birth was not known during the early life of Jesus and even after the resurrection probably did not form a part of the missionary preaching of the earliest apostolic church." [J. Gresham Machen, The Virgin Birth of Jesus, p 263.]

This admission that the doctrine of the virgin birth was not a part of the missionary preaching of the apostles during the period of the early expansion of the church is confirmed by the fact that neither the Christology of Paul nor the theologies of any of the New Testament evangelists depended upon the belief that Jesus was miraculously conceived and subsequently born of a virgin. It will come as a surprise to many Christians that it is actually impossible to fit the doctrine of the virgin birth into the theology of the primitive church -- certainly as that theology is stated in the New Testament. Machen was absolutely correct when he admitted that the doctrine of the virgin birth had no place in the preaching of the apostles. Because the earliest apostolic missionaries never mentioned the belief that Jesus was miraculously conceived and subsequently born of a virgin mother, it may reasonably be concluded that they did not think it necessary to endorse it -- if in fact they had heard of it.

## EXAMINING THE LETTERS OF PAUL

Paul never mentions the virgin birth. He does not even allude to it in connection with the creation or the rationalization of any of his doctrines. The logical conclusion must be that he did not believe that Jesus' birth was unusual. But silence alone cannot prove the absence of belief. So, although it is logical to conclude



that Paul did not accept the doctrine of the virgin birth, that conclusion cannot be proved to someone who is unwilling to accept it. To do this would require providing an exegesis of every verse of Paul's writings to the end of demonstrating that none of them supported the theory that Jesus was born of a virgin.

Fortunately it is unnecessary to be so thorough. Assuming that Paul's reasoning is consistent throughout his theology, all one needs to do to determine whether his views can be harmonized with a belief in the virgin birth or whether they preclude such a belief is to analyze a few of his fundamental doctrines as he stated them in letters to certain churches. We have made a rather extended examination of two of his more unique doctrines. That examination requires us to conclude that Paul did not -- in fact, could not -- believe that Jesus' birth was extraordinary. Our conclusion is based largely upon the fact that Paul argued that Jesus was born just as all other human beings were born, that his birth was "common" to all men.

#### **Galatians 4:4-7**

When Paul wrote to the Galatians about the birth of Jesus, he stated: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his son, born of woman, born under the law . . ." (Galatians 4:4 RSV).

One phrase from this statement deserves particular attention. That phrase is normally translated, "born of woman" -- or "born of a woman." Two translations, however, have the passage read, "born of a human mother." It seems at first that this translation, found in both The Good News Bible and The New Testament in Modern English, stretches the literal meaning of the original language. But a close scrutiny of these words in their context shows that this is the reading which expresses precisely what Paul intended to say to the Galatians. The Greek word he chose to use here was the word for "married woman" or "mother" [gune] instead of the word [parthenos]. "Gune" refers normally to a woman who was married and had borne a child. "Parthenos" refers to any young woman of marriageable age. It would be used occasionally of a young woman even after she had been married but had not yet become a mother. The correct reading of Paul's words is, therefore, "born of a human mother."

It has been argued extensively that Mary's conception was miraculous even though Jesus' birth was perfectly normal. Consequently, the argument runs, it was quite proper to apply the term "gune" to Mary; and because it meant "a married woman who had borne a child," thus, "a human mother," then Mary qualified for the designation "gune", even though she was a true virgin.

The trouble here is that the advocates of the virgin birth read into Paul's statement to the Galatians all those assumptions about Mary being a true virgin. **Paul said absolutely nothing here -- or anywhere else -- to warrant that opinion.** Furthermore, it is very questionable whether any of the Galatians had ever heard of either of the birth traditions. And, even if some of them were familiar with at least one, there would surely be others who were not. So it cannot be assumed that the Galatians would read the concept of Mary's virginity into their understanding of this passage. **Paul makes no inference here -- much less a direct assertion -- to the effect that Jesus' conception had been unusual.**

Paul was actually claiming precisely the opposite. He was stressing to the Galatians that Jesus had been born of "a human mother" just like everyone else had been. The language Paul used here, especially his word for "woman," indicates he was convinced that Jesus' birth was perfectly normal in every respect.

It is essential to understand the context here. Paul first explains to the Galatians that in the past "when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe" (Galatians 4:3 RSV). Then he tells how God had concluded that the appropriate time had come for him to send his Son to "redeem those who were under the law" (Galatians 4:5 RSV). He states further that God had concluded also that to accomplish this the Son had to become one with those he was coming to redeem. That is, he must be subject to the Law the same as everyone else. This, of course, would require him to be born of woman just as they had been. Paul puts the entire matter into a remarkable statement, one which should be perfectly clear, but which is often misinterpreted. Read how Phillips translates it:

**"But when the proper time came God sent his Son, born of a human mother and born under the jurisdiction of the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the authority of the Law and lead us into becoming, by adoption, true sons of God" (Galatians 4:4-5 Phillips).**

**Paul is affirming here the reality of Jesus' humanity under the Law. This means that Jesus, like everyone else, was subject to the Law. Paul gives no hint that he believes Jesus was born in a miraculous manner. The impression he gives, and obviously the impression he intends to give, is that Jesus' birth was exactly like that which is common to all men.**

This passage from Galatians is often pointed to as one of Paul's clearest and strongest statements about the incarnation. We cannot view this statement as going that far. But it is an affirmation that Paul believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Had Paul believed in the virgin birth, he surely would have mentioned it to support this understanding. Instead, he tacitly denies a belief in the virgin birth when he equates Jesus' birth to that of all others who had been born "under the law."

## **ROMANS 1:3-4**

One of the more significant statements of Paul is found in Romans 1:3-4. It provides the theological foundation for several of his doctrines which are stated later in his Letter to the Romans. The language of most translations obscures Paul's meaning Somewhat. No translation, we believe, gives an easily understandable and at the same time a fully accurate rendition of what Paul actually said. This is evidenced by the differences in language in the several versions we have been consulting. We have very little trouble with the translation of The New English Bible, except for its inclusion of one phrase. The concept of "the Holy Spirit" is incorrectly introduced into an otherwise brilliant reading. This concept is used here with the meaning it carried a century or so later. Our quarrel with this particular translation is not with the generic meaning of "Holy Spirit" but with the fact that this term is not found in Paul's original language. Paul never refers to "the Holy Spirit" in this passage. Moreover, other translators do not introduce it into their translations. Among the twelve versions we have been using, The New English Bible is the only one in which "the Holy Spirit" appears. Some versions do speak of "the Spirit of holiness," capitalizing "Spirit," in the attempt to identify "spirit" as "Holy Spirit." This cannot be justified, however, because the word Paul used in this context was 'pneuma.' It is the general word for "spirit." It must be translated without capitalizing "s". A few translators have resolved the problem by using "his divine holiness" or an equivalent. Notice how Paul differentiates between the two "levels" of Jesus' personhood: "It [the gospel] is about his Son: on the human level he was born of David's stock, but on the level of the spirit . . . he was declared Son of God by a mighty act in that he rose from the dead; it is about Jesus Christ our Lord"

(Romans 1:3-4 NEB).

What is important here is that Paul was noting how Jesus had a peculiar relationship with God on two levels. On the human level, God designated him as "the Anointed One," that is, as "the Christ." Paul regularly used the Greek synonym, Christ, for Messiah. On the level of the spirit, God declared Jesus to be Son of God on the occasion of raising him from the dead.

Paul points out that on the human level ("according to the flesh") Jesus was qualified to be designated as "the Anointed One." Paul never uses the Hebrew title "Messias". But he is constantly adding its Greek synonym "Christ" to Jesus' name. He was thereby stipulating that Jesus was the "Messias." **In Paul's terminology this means "the Christ" by virtue of being born of David's stock.**

**Answer for yourself: But how had he descended from David? Through his father, Joseph. Because Paul stipulated that Jesus was "of David's stock" he was thereby stipulating also that Joseph was his father. This proves that Paul could not have believed that Jesus was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit and was subsequently born of a true virgin – born therefore without a human father. In such a case he would not have been "of David's stock."**



**But being eligible to be selected as "The Anointed One" did not automatically make Jesus that. Paul believed that Jesus received that designation when God raised him from the dead. Therefore, it was Paul's understanding that Jesus was not really "the Anointed One" prior to his resurrection.**

Something else happened when Jesus was raised from the dead. It happened on the level of the spirit. Note how Paul puts it: ". .. on the level of the spirit . . . he was declared Son of God by a mighty act in that he rose from the dead: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:4 NEB). This passage shows clearly that Paul was convinced Jesus was the Son of God. It also confirms that Paul believed that Jesus was not to be regarded as the Son of God prior to his resurrection. Paul asserts here that Jesus became the Son of God at the time of his resurrection.

One must not overlook either of the emphases Paul made in this extremely important -- yet often misunderstood -- passage. On the human level, Jesus' relationship with God was as God's Anointed One. But on the spiritual level, his relationship was as Son. This means that Jesus was Son of God on the spiritual level. It is significant that Paul believed that both of these relationships were achieved upon the occasion of Jesus' resurrection.

For the purpose of this study, the most important fact which has come to light is that in Paul's view neither Jesus' relation to God on the human (physical) level as his "Anointed One" -- thus, as the Messiah -- nor his relation to God on the spiritual level as His "Son," had anything to do with the manner of his birth. Paul believed that both relationships were achieved when Jesus was resurrected.

This means that according to Paul, Jesus' divine Son-ship -- in all its aspects -- came neither by virtue of his ancestry nor from his manner of birth but because of and in connection with his resurrection.

## ROMANS 5:12-21

Paul presents one of his key doctrines in Romans 5:12-21. Inasmuch as these verses will be examined thoroughly in a later section, we need only to note here that this passage about the so-called "Second Adam" also precludes Paul's believing in the virgin birth.

## PAUL'S CHRISTOLOGY

Many volumes have been written for the purpose of stating, or explaining, or defending Paul's Christology. Even if we felt competent to compose an analysis of Paul's doctrine of Jesus as the Christ, no such analysis is needed here. It is only necessary to point out that Paul is completely silent about the virgin birth. This means that the subject is never mentioned or alluded to in any of his Christological passages. The most impressive thing about Paul's silence here is not just that he is completely silent but that he does not say anything in those areas where his silence is inexplicable if he knew of and accepted either of the birth traditions of Matthew and Luke. Paul obviously was able to develop what was to him a complete and consistent Christology without the use of or the dependence upon the concept of a miraculous conception of Jesus and his subsequent birth of a virgin.

## EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The author of The Epistle to the Hebrews, while not an eyewitness (Hebrews 2:3), does have a vivid knowledge of several events in the life of Jesus and in the early church. He was obviously knowledgeable about the contemporary beliefs and activities of the early Christians. But he, like Paul, was completely silent about

any understanding that Jesus was born of a virgin.

This early Christian writer emphasized that Jesus was human. If one is surprised by this emphasis, he should know that there was abroad a heresy which insisted that Jesus was entirely divine and not in the least human. However, it was the contention of this New Testament theologian that Jesus assumed his humanity temporarily in order to become a worthy High Priest and thereby be the source of eternal salvation. In the course of his explanation of how Jesus became temporarily human ("for a little while was made a little lower than the angels," Hebrews 2:9 RSV) this unknown author could have referred to Jesus' birth. Inasmuch as he did not, one must presume that he did not consider such a reference to be necessary or even valuable, although the doctrine of the virgin birth could have supported his stated belief that Jesus was "made a little lower than the angels."

Possibly the author of Hebrews did not refer to the birth traditions because he had not heard them. Or it may be that he was aware of them but rejected the claims being made in them because he believed that Jesus' birth occurred in a completely normal way. This can be deduced from the fact that he made Jesus' humanity -- his perfect humanity -- the basis for his ministry of redemption. It was Jesus' perfect obedience as a human which proved that he was the perfect Son of God. It had nothing to do with how he was born.

The gist of the theology of this unknown author is found in the references we pointed to at the beginning of this section. The one verse which expresses his view best is: "For the one who makes men holy and the men who are made holy share a common humanity" (Hebrews 2:11 Phillips).

This early Christian theologian accepts Jesus as a human being as well as a Son of God. But he does not predicate Jesus' Son-ship upon a virgin birth. When he states that Jesus and the ones he came to "make holy" "share a common humanity," he proves that he considers Jesus' birth to have been exactly like that of all other humans. Their humanity was common.

He confirms all of the previous conclusions when he adds later: "Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18 RSV). This entire passage is significant, of course, but the phrase, "in every respect," must be singled out for emphasis. This generalization does not allow for the exclusion of any phase of Jesus' humanity.

The intent of the author of Hebrews was obviously to prove the perfect humanity of Jesus, a humanity he describes as just like that of all other humans. It must follow that he could not have believed the tenets of the dogma of the virgin birth, a dogma which declares that Jesus was not born like other humans.

## THE REMAINDER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Because none of the gospel writers, nor Paul, nor any apostle ever mentioned the virgin birth, it is not surprising that neither the Pastoral or Catholic Epistles nor the Apocalypse of John ever refers to it either.

The complete silence of the book of James, however, is a different matter. If the writer of this book was James, the brother of Jesus who became the patriarch of the church at Jerusalem --as numerous scholars believe -- then his silence about how Jesus was born must be viewed as saliently significant because it cannot be attributed to ignorance. Had his brother Jesus been conceived in a miraculous way, James would surely have been told of it after Jesus' resurrection if not before.

Or, if the book of James, as now found in the New Testament, is a revision and expansion of the teachings of



Jesus' brother James -- as some are convinced -- then that editor certainly would have confirmed in his revision of the earlier work that Jesus' birth was miraculous if he understood such was the case. However, because there is nothing in the book of James which even hints that there was anything extraordinary about the birth of Jesus, it must be concluded that the author of James -- whoever he was -- must have believed that Jesus' birth was normal. Our personal view, derived from considerable investigation and reflection, is that the Book of James was written by an early Christian (whether Jesus' brother or not) who was voicing his disagreement with some of Paul's doctrines.

## BUT NOT ALL AGREE WITH US....

A few scholars disagree with our claim that the "rest" of the New Testament is silent about the virgin birth. They offer two passages which they insist support the view that Jesus was born in a miraculous manner. The two passages are: **I Timothy 3:16 and Revelation 12.**

The problem with the verse in I Timothy is that ancient manuscripts give varied readings for one word. One sentence of the verse reads in The Revised Standard Version: "He was manifested in the flesh" (I Timothy 3:16 RSV). A footnote reading in that version points out that the Greek word which is translated "he" really means "who." Moreover, some manuscripts use "God" and a few use "which." If the word "God" is used, then the verse supports the doctrine of the incarnation, but it still makes no clear reference to the virgin birth. Phillips seems to have caught the meaning of the verse without using "he," "which," or "God:" "No one would deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery, resting as it does on the one who showed himself as a human being . . ." (I Timothy 3:16 Phillips). Not the slightest hint is given here that there was anything out of the ordinary about the coming of the "one who showed himself as a human being."

In Revelation 12, a pregnant woman is mentioned as a sign visible in the sky. The woman is expected to give birth to a male child who is "to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (Revelation 12:5 RSV). A few commentators contend that the woman is Mary and the child is Jesus. This interpretation is quite far-fetched. It is based on pure speculation. Other scholars view the woman as representing a variety of things, with the variations of their interpretations so extreme no consensus of opinion could possibly be reached. In any case, no matter what or whom the woman represents, there is no clear reference to, nor even a hint about, a virgin birth. The woman of Revelation 12 is merely a pregnant woman. No reason is given to believe that she became pregnant in an unusual way.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN HERESIES

Perversions of the teachings of a great leader begin to appear as soon as he dies. So it is not surprising that several "Christian" heresies arose almost immediately after Jesus' death. Some of them may be lumped together under the general classification of "Gnostic heresies." We need not consider all or even a majority of them for they had many things in common.

Some Gnostics, such as Cerinthus, who was widely known in the western section of Asia Minor, believed that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary. His unique teaching was that, although Jesus was completely human, Christ dwelt in the man Jesus. Cerinthus explained that Christ descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at the time of his baptism. Christ then remained in Jesus all during his earthly life. Jesus was endowed with remarkable powers because of the presence of Christ within him. Christ remained in Jesus' body, Cerinthus claimed, until Jesus was about to die on the cross. Thus, it was really the man Jesus who died and was resurrected.

Cerinthus, who was called a "false prophet" in "The Epistle of the Apostles," believed that Jesus truly was God's Son, but that he became God's Son by "adoption." He did not achieve that status by the manner of his birth, but by virtue of the fact that God was willing to adopt him as Son. Some New Testament writers also use the concept of adoption, but certainly not in the manner of Cerinthus. They stress that it was possible for all

men to become sons of God, but only because God could "elect" to "adopt" them as sons.

Some Gnostics were known as "Docetists," a name derived from a Greek word which means "to seem." They held that Jesus was not really human, that he never came to earth "in the flesh." They were convinced that he could not have possessed a material body, because all matter was evil. Flesh, as matter, would therefore be evil. Consequently, the perfect and sinless Christ could not have existed even temporarily in an evil body. This led them to believe that Jesus' body of flesh only seemed to exist. Because Jesus was really divine, he only appeared to have a body like humans. The major debate of Gnostics within their own ranks as well as with orthodox Christians was over whether or not Jesus was born of Mary. (Apparently there is no mention in Gnostic literature of the virgin birth hypothesis).

This sketchy review demonstrates that even the defenders of the absolutely unique nature of Jesus disagreed over his origin. Some believed that he was entirely human, born of two human parents, but with Christ living in him after his baptism. And others believed that he was not in the least human but entirely divine; that his body only seemed to be human. These were the extremes. Other views ranged between them.

It is interesting -- and we believe significant -- that most of the heresies which confronted the early church questioned Jesus' humanity rather than his divinity. A study of the writings of the early church fathers shows that they spent more time trying to prove that Jesus was human rather than that he was divine. Their debate -- both among themselves as well as with others -- concerned whether Jesus was always divine or whether he became divine at his resurrection. A corollary debate raged over how his divinity related to his humanity. Both of these theological arguments continued for centuries. The resolution of these dichotomies came ostensibly with the creation of the dogma of the Trinity. But unfortunately this resolution proved to be only partial and temporary. A debate continues to this day, but now it centers upon what the creeds which define the Trinity really mean.

## OTHER TRADITIONS CONCERNING JESUS' BIRTH

The narratives of Matthew and Luke were not the only birth stories which were being told during the last part of the first century. Quite a number of such stories appeared in both Jewish and Jewish-Christian communities.

The theme of some of these stories was that Jesus was really an illegitimate child. At least two of them declared that he was the son of a Roman soldier and that Joseph married Mary to give Jesus a father and a name. One tradition even gave the name of the Roman soldier as "Panthera" (or possibly "Pantera").

This accusation that Jesus was an illegitimate child was repeated for centuries. Even as late as the eighteenth century, Voltaire, a bitter critic of the Christian religion, repeated those allegations as if he were citing documented history. Others, in turn, quoted Voltaire, believing that such a learned man had surely authenticated his information.

A very unusual tradition was related in an early second century manuscript, "The Epistle of the Apostles." "The Epistle of the Apostles," M. S. Enslin, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Volume A-D, pp 172-3.] Having been translated into English, this document is now called, "The Testament of Our Lord in Galilee." It purports to record revelations made by Jesus to the Eleven just before he ascended into heaven, revelations made through his answers to questions asked by the apostles. According to this writing, Jesus alleged that he had appeared to Mary as the angel Gabriel and then had entered her body to be born.

The two preceding traditions both claim to explain the origin of the child Jesus. One was eagerly accepted by many of the foes of Christianity. It was given a quasi-historical status by being recorded in Talmudic records. This was the tradition that Jesus was an illegitimate child. The other appeared in a document which claimed to be an authentic Christian writing. In this tradition Jesus is alleged to have said he put himself into Mary's womb.



**These illustrations show how wild and ridiculous some of the legends about Jesus' birth were. One could not invent explanations of how Jesus was born more disparate than these two stories along with the biblical traditions. Yet all four are recorded in documents written presumably by Christians in the late New Testament period or shortly thereafter.**

## **THE VENERATION OF MARY**

**Little is known about the life of Mary the mother of Jesus. This is quite true historically, despite the many legends which originated within the Catholic Church -- in all branches -- where such stories were needed to support the evolving doctrines of the virgin birth, the immaculate conception, Mary as Mother of God, Mary as Queen of Heaven, and related dogmas.**

**Most of those legends are based upon a few writings composed during the expanding period of the church but not included in the New Testament canon of scripture. They were never accepted officially as "scripture" even by the church which used them. The following are some of the apocryphal works in which legends about Mary are recorded: "Protoevangelium of James (History of James Concerning the Birth of Mary);" "The Gospel of Thomas;" "The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew;" "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary;" "The Assumption of the Virgin (Liber Transitus);" "The History of Joseph the Carpenter." These writings claim to report incidents during the life of Mary. No reputable scholar -- neither Catholic nor Protestant -- has accorded these works equal authority with the books of the New Testament. Even a cursory examination reveals quickly that these apocryphal documents were written with doctrine and not history in mind. Nevertheless, artists and popular authors have used these writings as if they possessed historic value equal to that of the gospels.**

**This is probably because the gospels say so little about Mary. They neither tell much about her life nor venerate her in the least. They simply treat her as the natural mother of Jesus. Even in the interpolated birth traditions she is not viewed as an exceptional woman -- only as an obedient one.**

**Outside the interpolated narratives about Jesus' birth, Mary is first mentioned in the account of her visit to Jerusalem with Joseph and Jesus when Jesus was twelve years old. The occasion was the celebration of Passover. During the period of celebrating Jesus, a bright and inquisitive boy, spent most of his time in the temple discussing religious matters with scribes and priests. Although one may wonder how it could have happened, when Joseph and Mary left for home with the rest of the travelers they did not realize that Jesus was not in the group until they had traveled a full day. They returned to Jerusalem, of course, and spent three days locating Jesus. When they finally found him in the temple debating with the leading teachers, Mary chastised him for not letting them know where he was. Jesus defended himself by asking: "But why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49 Phillips). The lack of rapport between Jesus and his parents is shown by the next sentence in Luke's account of this incident: "But they did not understand what he meant" (Luke 2:50 NEB). How could Joseph and Mary not understand that Jesus would likely go to the temple if everything that was stated in Luke's account of Jesus' conception and birth had been true? It is impossible to believe that Joseph and especially Mary would have misunderstood what Jesus meant if they knew that Jesus had been conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit and if shepherds had told them that his birth had been heralded by the singing of angels. The fact that Luke reports that Jesus' parents did not understand him when he suggested to them that they surely should have known he would be interested in going to the temple argues strongly that he did not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. This proves that the author who wrote the story about the visit of the boy Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover -- whoever he was -- could not have written also the birth tradition found earlier in Luke.]**

**That Luke believed that Joseph was actually Jesus' father is evidenced by the fact that he treats him as such in this narrative. Twice in the story he calls Joseph and Mary Jesus' "parents." Once he has Mary referring to Joseph as Jesus' "father."**

**Mary is found next at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-11). She, Jesus and the disciples were enjoying the festivities when the wine gave out. Mary told Jesus about the problem and then told the servants to do just as**

**Jesus would direct. Whereupon Jesus performed his first miracle, the changing of water into wine. The incident is interesting, but teaches nothing about Mary except that she participated in the social life of the community.**

**According to the Gospel of John, Mary was present at the crucifixion (John 19:25-27). Jesus, dying on the cross, noticed his mother and asked "the disciple whom he loved" to accept her as his own mother. It is surprising that Jesus did not try to see that she was protected and cared for by one of her own sons. Some of them were still living: James, for example (Acts 1:13-14).**

**There is a plausible explanation. None of Jesus' brothers or sisters were present at the crucifixion. But, according to John, one of Mary's sisters was with her at the cross. This sister was probably Salome, the mother of James and John, whose father was Zebedee (Matthew 25:56; Mark 15:40). It has always been presumed that it was her son, John, who was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In other words, John was Jesus' cousin. So Jesus, on the cross, asked his cousin John to be sure that Mary was cared for.**

**This explanation, though possible, is still based upon conjecture.**

**The problem here is that, according to the other three gospels, Mary was not present at the crucifixion. Each of the Synoptic writers records a list of women who were present while Jesus was being crucified. None of these lists include Jesus' mother Mary. Thus, it cannot be stated for sure that she was present at the cross.**

**Jesus appeared several times after his resurrection and to a considerable number of people. Mary is never mentioned as being among them.**

**Mary is introduced a few times simply as Jesus' mother.**

**The scripture tells of two times when Mary did not understand Jesus. Both situations have already been described. The first was when Mary and Joseph discovered their twelve-year-old son in the temple, but did not understand his explanation of why he had gone there (Luke 2:41-52). The second was when she, along with the rest of her family, came to "take charge" of Jesus because they thought he had lost his mind (Mark 3:21-31). Because of this attitude of his family, Jesus was reported to have renounced them in favor of those who do the will of his heavenly Father (Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-24). We are convinced that these records were edited to make them conform to later beliefs. In any case, the members of Jesus' family eventually became his followers. Mary and his brothers were in the upper room at Pentecost. And James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem.] This is a very weighty argument against the virgin birth. Had Mary known that Jesus was the miraculously conceived Son of God she could not possibly have believed that he had become insane.**

**The very last time Mary is mentioned in scripture is in the account of what happened to the one hundred and twenty disciples who were gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Like the rest, she was fasting and praying while awaiting divine guidance -- acting precisely as Jesus had instructed. Her sons were again with her. So, if she had gone with her nephew John after the crucifixion, she did not stay with him. The only thing that can be learned about Mary from this incident is that she was present with those who were "filled with the Holy Spirit." It must be presumed that this experience came to her as to the others.**

**This review demonstrates that, except in the birth narratives, Mary is presented only casually in the New Testament. Her veneration had not yet begun. In fact, after her appearance with the one hundred and twenty at Pentecost, Mary drops from sight. She gradually fades into the past. Tradition claims that she died in 63 A. D. That date, however, is mentioned only in sources which must be dated much later.**

**To say that Mary was not revered in her lifetime is not to say anything against her. It is only to point out that she was not awarded any special recognition before her death. Even the scriptures of the New Testament do not set her apart from other women. No one has any reason, however, to regard her as less than a good and loving mother, interested in all of her children. Jesus respected his father so much he called God "abba," a child's endearing term for father. It corresponds to our "papa." Surely he**



respected his mother equally. This is true, no doubt, meven though there were times when neither his family nor any one else really understood him. To those who claim that Mary was "ever virgin" we must ask how the following scriptures can be explained in light of that allegation:

*"(Joseph) took Mary home to be his wife, but had no intercourse with her until her son was born (Matthew 1:25 NEB).*

*"All these were constantly at prayer together (in the upper room), and with them a group of women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1: 14 NEB).*

*"Then his mother and his brothers arrived . . ." (Mark 3:31 NEB).*

*"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters with us? (Mark 6:3 NEB).]*

Now, is it beginning to make a little more sense to you?



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## A VIRGIN BIRTH PROPHECY...WAS IT CREATED AFTER THE FACT?

Prophecy is a muddy science, and Bible prophecy more muddy than most. Take those Old Testament prophecies. Evangelists never tire of telling us that hundreds were fulfilled in the life of Yeshua, far too many to be called coincidence.

**Answer for yourself:** But how many of these are real, and how many are propheta ex eventu--prophecies constructed after the fact, products of careful selection and interpretation?

**Answer for yourself:** How many of these New Testament prophecies “fulfilled” are twisted and mistranslated on purpose from the Jewish Scriptures?

To get an idea, let's look at the most famous, the prophecy of the child Immanuel as presented in the Gospel of Matthew:

*Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, G-d with us (1:22-23 , KJV).*

Most good Christians take this passage from the KJV Bible or other Christian translations at face value, assured that the prophet Isaiah did indeed describe Yeshuas miraculous conception and birth seven hundred years before. What you need to know is that most Christian versions have build their Old Testament Scriptures off of the Greek LXX Septuagint and not the Jewish Masoretic Text. If they had been faithful to the Jewish Text the word used by Isaiah is NOT “virgin” but “young woman”. As you can see this is NOT a translation but a “theological creationism” to make the presentation of Yeshua more agreeable to the Gentiles who already had “virgin-born” g-d men by the tons. More on that later.

**Answer for yourself:** But did Isaiah really intended for us to understand “virgin” from his text? Authorities who have honesty and integrity before their “theological agenda” are nearly unanimous. The answer is no.

**Answer for yourself:** What did Isaiah really say? Turning to Isaiah 7:14 (Masoretic text/Jewish Palestinian Text), we find his precise words:

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, ha'almah shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Matthew's interpretation of this passage has several problems, the largest hanging on the Hebrew word 'almah. Writing in Greek, the gospel author turned almah into parthenos , a word usually (but not always)



meaning "virgin." In fact, he had a precedent for this; the Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament used by Greek-speaking Jews of his day, did indeed use parthenos in the Isaiah passage. But the Septuagint was for the most part a notoriously sloppy translation [request our information on this corrupted version of the Old Testament], and its version of Isaiah, according to the majority of honest Bible scholars who comment on the LXX attest that the book of Isaiah was generally more error-ridden than the rest of the Septuagint translations.

By the Middle Ages, the Jews had abandoned the Septuagint, and later Greek translations, by Aquila, Theodotion, Lucien and others [both Jews and Gentile-proselytes who wanted to correct such errors in the Greek text], did not use the word parthenos. (The Septuagint, commonly known as the LXX, is still favored by Eastern Orthodox churches). You need only investigate these other "corrections" to see the evidence for yourself.

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that the Hebrew Old Testament Palestinian Text [true Masoretic Text to which its accuracy was verified by discoveries with the Dead Sea Scrolls] predating the Septuagint used 'almah' meaning "young woman" and did not use the concept "virgin"? That being so, then what did the word mean?

While rare in the Hebrew Bible, almah does occur here and there, notably in Genesis 24:43 and Exodus 2:8 , but an examination of the contexts of these passages will show nothing to suggest that the noun imputed virginity.

On the other hand, a male youth in the Old Testament was called na'ar or elem, the feminine forms of which were na'arah and 'almah respectively. The limited usage of elem (lad or stripling) in the Old Testament nowhere implied sexual purity; thus an 'almah was an adolescent female, virgin or not, just as an elem was an adolescent male. In fact, one verse does seem to use 'almah in reference to a non-virgin. This is **Proverbs 30:19** , which listed four things too marvelous to understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the sea, and the way of a man with a maiden ( 'almah). To say the least, "the way of a man with an 'almah" would certainly jeopardize a state of sexual purity, but more damaging than this rather obvious fact is the comparison that the writer went on to state: "Such is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats, wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong'" (v:20 , NAB). It seems odd writer that the author would use 'almah to denote sexual purity and then compare it to the ongoing affairs of an adulterous woman. More likely the author's point was that all these things have one element in common: they do not leave much of a trace.

Aside from this, the Torah does, in fact, have an explicit word for virgin (betulah or bethulah), which is always used where the context requires virginity. (For confirmation, see Genesis 24:16 , Leviticus 21:14 , and Deuteronomy 22:15-19 ). Even Isaiah shows his familiarity with the term as he used it in 62:5 . Therefore being acquainted with the word, but choosing not to use the very word that conveyed without a doubt a "virginous state" reveals to us that its nonuse by Isaiah in the in the "Immanuel" passage is a rather loud hint that Isaiah spoke only of a young woman, not specifically of a virgin. He could have used the unmistakable Hebrew word for "virgin" if he has so wanted and we see this clearly in his other use of the word to convey such a concept in another isolated passage. But he purposefully did not choose to use it in Isa 7:14!!!!!!

More to the point, nearly all modern commentaries agree with Talmudic scholars that Isaiah's "sign" had nothing to do with a messiah. Reviewing more than a dozen for this article, I found only one dissenter. Significantly, it was one that spouted the fundamentalist party line on every other issue. Interested readers can jaunt to the library and peruse the massive *Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 5, pp. 217-22), one of the most authoritative works in the field. Or more succinctly, try the popular *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (Paul J, Achtemeier, gen. ed., 1985), page 419, where this statement is found:

*It is clear, however, that... Isaiah 7:14 did not speak of the miraculous birth of Jesus centuries later.... The sign of Immanuel offered by the prophet to Ahaz had to do with the imminent birth of a child, of a mother known to Ahaz and Isaiah, and signified G-d's presence with his people....*

Indeed, Isaiah's word for "sign" was "ot", which in the Hebrew Bible invariably indicated an imminent sign or omen, not one in the far future. Keep reading, in fact, and you will see Isaiah's sign appear just a few verses later (Is. 8:3-4 ), when a certain prophetess gives birth to a son--a child whom G-d called "Immanuel" in verse 8. By contrast, nowhere in the New Testament did any character ever call Yeshua Immanuel.

**Answer for yourself:** Why the confusion?

Of course, the author of the Gospel of Matthew [not the Apostle for at this period literary productions were given "names" of famous men to enhance their value] had a vested interest in the budding church and wanted to ground the new Christian mythos in Jewish prophecy whenever possible. Almost all scholars agree this "Matthew" was not the apostle but rather a Greek-speaking Christian living in or near Antioch of Syria, who wrote about A.D. 90, about two generations after the crucifixion. Very likely, he was familiar with only the Septuagint version of Isaiah. (That Matthew wrote the first gospel was a tradition started by Bishop Papias of Hieropolos in the second century, and this one was in Hebrew, and if in Hebrew, the word "virgin" would never have been used since a familiarity with Hebrew would teach otherwise.)

Moreover, we know the gospel writers were not adverse to massaging and even manufacturing details in order to "flesh out" the Yeshua story. That is why, for example, you find such conflicting genealogies for Yeshua in Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38 .

## **DON'T FORGET THE CONTEXT...FOR INTERPRETATION**

All things considered, it is hardly surprising that "Matthew" would pull Isaiah a bit out of context and try to wring a new meaning from it. What is surprising is that this literary sleight of hand grew to become such a cornerstone of Christendom and still has modern fundamentalists so befuddled. So let's dust off our Bibles (I like the New Revised English Bible best for clarity and the Revised Standard Version for beauty) and reread the Immanuel prophecy--in context.

The setting is the Syro-Ephraimite war (ca. 734 B.C.). Wicked King Ahaz of Judah was frantic about Ephraim (another name for the northern kingdom, Israel) and Damascus (capital of Syria), which were plotting a preemptive strike. Isaiah enters, offering a sign. Ahaz demurs. Isaiah storms at him for his lack of faith and then provides a sign anyway: A male child would be born. Before this child is old enough to know to "refuse evil and choose the good," Assyria would lay waste both Samaria and Damascus (7:16 ). [This sub-prophecy, in fact, came true in 2 Kings 16:9 ; 17:5-6 .] Then, to punish Ahaz, Assyria itself, with Egypt, would arise as a far greater threat.

Think about this. If Ahaz was concerned with an imminent attack from Samaria and Syria, why offer a sign that would not occur for seven centuries? To Ahaz this would be no sign at all.

**Answer for yourself:** Also, if the Immanuel child was G-d incarnate, how could Isaiah speak of a time when Immanuel would not know enough to choose good over evil?

**Answer for yourself:** What about divine omniscience?



Note also the striking parallel between verses 7:16 and 8:4 . Here is Isaiah prophesying almost identically about both children. The more closely you look, the more difficult to deny that these two are identical. You can hardly blame evangelicals for seeing a special significance in the name Immanu'el, Hebrew for "G-d with us," but such language and imagery was right at home in the world of old Jewish nomenclature, where every other proper name seemed a reminder of G-d's presence. Thus we have Isaiah, which means "G-d's help"; Michael , "Like unto G-d"; Israel, "Striving with G-d"; Elihu, "He is my G-d"; Adonijah , "Yahweh Lord"; and a host of others.

## THE LINK TO ISAIAH 9...PAY ATTENTION

Then again, some apologists try to rescue their favored exegesis by equating both Immanuel and Yeshua with the child mentioned a bit later in chapter 9 of Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born....etc." It is tempting. This section, while obscure, is in fact one of the most powerful and poetic passages in the Old Testament. It may well be an early messianic prophecy but in fairness, note that most Jewish scholars (who should know better than evangelicals) insist it is an ode praising Hezekiah, Ahaz's righteous son (2 Chron. 29 ), who came to the throne in 720 B.C. and centralized the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem. The various titles ascribed to him, such as "Prince of Peace" and "Everlasting Father," were apparently titles of honor used by the ancient Jews for favorite kings. (You find the same sort of bread-buttering in Egyptian hymns to the pharaoh and in Babylonian royal eulogies.) Hebrew scholars also remind us, gently, that the key Hebrew verbs in Isaiah 9:6 are in the past tense (the child had already been born)!

*A moot point. For reasons stated earlier, we cannot use the child in Isaiah 9:6 as a bridge connecting Immanuel to Yeshua. As Old Testament prophecies of the Christian Messiah go, this one, like so many others, has been overrated.*

Also of importance is the fact that in Hebrew there are no "to be" verbs as we have in English. Keeping this fact in our minds then let us read Isa. 9:6:

*Isa 9:6 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty G-d, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (KJV)*

This means that the descriptions above referring to this "particular child" are only modifiers of his attributes. It is not intended, as we have in our English language, to convey that the child is literally these things since called by these names. Said another way, the child will have a lot in common with "the" Wonderful Counsellor who is understood to be G-d, the child will have a lot in common with "the" mighty G-d, the child will have a lot in common with "the" everlasting Father, and that the child will have a lot in common with "the" Prince of Peace, but such designations describe attributes of the child which he will have in common with G-d. The passages, buy using these descriptions of G-d is NOT SAYING the child is G-d but only will have attributes in common with G-d. The absence of the "to be" verbs in Hebrew means, unlike in English, that the child IS NOT THESE THINGS, only alike these descriptions, which the Jews of that time knew referred only to G-d. These attributes of this child referred to the child of Isaiah 7 which was to be a sign to King Ahaz and the Rabbis today tell us the child in question was Hezekiah. Maybe you need to refresh you study on Hezekiah to

understand how he exhibited in his life these attributes attributed to him in Isaiah 9.

## IN CONCLUSION

If you have read our materials over the years you must have been struck by our hard-hitting and ruthless attack on untruth passed off as "Divine Revelation." I am a firm believer that one's faith, no matter what it is, gives no one the permission to alter or corrupt the Word of G-d, the Jewish Masoretic text, in the presentation of one's religious belief system [whether it is the corruption of the Christian's Old Testament or the hundreds of misquotations in the New Testament]. But such as been done for over two thousand years and few know of this unless that study intensely.

The alteration of the Jewish Masoretic Text by the early Essenes and the later Gentile followers of Jesus is a crime of the highest magnitude, and as said before, the vast majority of Christians have never seen this or have been told this. The "selling" of Jesus as the Messiah to the Gentile nations through the purposeful alteration, adulteration, misquotation, misapplication, and the taking of Jewish texts out of context has done great harm to the Divine Revelation given mankind. This corruption of past Divine Revelation in the presentation of Yeshua as the Messiah to the Gentile world dishonors his name as well as angers G-d. Since knowing this to have been done Bet Emet has presented hard-hitting studies for over 10 years to alert the good people who both love Yeshua and G-d, but whose worship has been compromised because of such errors and changes to the Bible Yeshua used.

Having said that let me also say that there are yet compelling reasons why Yeshua/Jesus just might have been the Messiah ben Yosef, the suffering Messiah Servant. But the corrupting of the Jewish texts by the Gentile Church to "sell" him as Messiah to the Gentile nations at the expense of the Jewish Bible is a crime of unimaginable proportions. Knowing this to have been done, I cannot not let passages that have been altered and that never referred to him to be used to attest to his identity and Messiahship when they originally had no historical or contextual bearing on him at all. To do so is nothing short of a religious fraud! Let us not make more of him than the Father intended, yet at the same time, let us not make less of him as well. Let us always to remember that we are to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth and our failure to discern such adulteration of truth concerning Yeshua compromises severely such worship!

I will leave you with a quote from my Rabbi:

*"We know that a lot concerning Yeshua was taken out of our literature (the Jew's), and we know that too much was written about him into your (Christian) literature; somewhere between both extremes lies the truth about him."*

Such is the great need for intense study...and the truth is hard to come by after the reactionism of both Judaism and Gentile Christianity over the last two thousand years. Shalom.





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## A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE...OH REALLY?

According to the New Testament, one of the signs of Yeshua's Messiahship was a virgin birth.

**Answer for yourself:** But is this really a sign that authenticates the identity of the Messiah?

Christianity claims that within some, but not all Christian Old Testaments, we find the following rendering of Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

**Answer for yourself:** But have we as Christians and followers of Yeshua erred in our understanding of the Isaiah 7:14 passage?

There has probably never been an "Old" Testament Scripture more frequently quoted by Christians than this verse. This is especially true every Christmas when we are all reminded, whether we want to be or not, that a virgin brought forth a son to be the savior of the world. But, unknown to most Christians, there is a problem here, and we at Bet Emet are dedicated to the elucidation of the facts that bring assurance to the correct interpretation of the Biblical Scriptures. Thus the reason for this article and those like them. We feel mandated by G-d to be honest to the text, Biblical history, Biblical language, Biblical context, culture, archeology, anthropology, etc., in our pursuit of truth and the spreading of the true "Gospel" of G-d.

First of all, the supposed quote from Isaiah 7:14 as found in most English Bibles doesn't follow the Masoretic Text of the "Old" Testament. It comes from the altered and corrupted Septuagint! This is of major importance because accurate Biblical translation requires that the word and the concept it carries in the original be translated accurately in any translation; thus meaning the translated word carry the same concept attached to the original word from which the translation began. Such is not the case here, and other places as well in your Christian Bibles. We have with this Isaiah 7:14 quote a major instance of the KJV translators inserting their own theology in place of G-d's Word. They could have chosen to translate the verse according to the Jewish Masoretic Text but instead they opted to translate it according to the Septuagint, which many know and acknowledge is one of the poorest translations of any book every made. Shame on them! But, like billions of Christians, I had heard this verse repeatedly throughout my life and it was certainly ingrained in my mind as sacred Scripture. Also, like those same millions, I can't really say that I had ever bothered to look at the story and accurately of the translation of the Christian version of Isaiah 7:14.

When I began to investigate the facts for myself I found things often completely different from which I both heard and been taught by Christian leaders. And so will you if you will only look for yourself!

## A VIRGIN OR A YOUNG WOMAN?

The word translated "virgin," in Christian theology and in most New Testaments, actually means "the young woman," (i.e., the original Hebrew is "ha'almah" or "the young woman," and not "ha'bethulah," which means "the virgin"). The original Hebrew from which some of the more accurate New Testaments

quotes reads: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

**Answer for yourself:** Are you aware that a number of modern New Testament translations have correctly translated this verse and maybe you have not possibly yet seen them; especially if you are a KJV man because it is wrong in the KJV?

In fact The New English Bible, The Good News Bible, and The Revised Standard Version translate the Hebrew correctly. And they are not the only ones who translate it correctly as we saw in the last article. The verse is, literally, "Hinneha ha-almah harah ve-yeldeth ben ve-karath shem-o Immanuel" in Hebrew.

Of course there have been volumes written by Christians defending this Scripture as a prophecy of the coming Messiah (specifically Yeshua). But, even if an entire library were written, it would mean absolutely nothing in light of the real story and its connection to the salvation and the restoration of the Ten Tribes of Israel in the end time. Let us examine for ourselves.

## COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE VIRGIN BIRTH STORY

H.W.F. Gesenius, who has authored a Hebrew Lexicon and who is considered a language scholar by other Christian scholars, renders the Hebrew "ha'almah" thus:

"Used of a youthful spouse recently married, Isa. 7:14 (compare Joel 1:8). The notion of unspotted virginity is not that which this word conveys, for which the proper word is 'habethulah.'" He notes that the Septuagint "incorrectly rendered" the word as virgin, and ends by saying, "neither does it convey the idea of the unmarried state, as has of late been maintained . . ." (Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, p. 634, #5959. 23. Ibid).

I can't help but to quote the added notation of the translator of Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, one Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, L.L.D., which shows the complete ignorance and bias of Christianity in this matter: "The object in view in seeking to undermine the opinion which would assign the signification of virgin to this word, is clearly to raise a discrepancy between Isa. 7:14, and Matt. 1:23." "The absolute authority of the New Testament is, however, quite sufficient to settle the question to a Christian" (Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, p. 634, #5959. 23. Ibid).

**Answer for yourself:** But I would ask you if the New Testament should carry such authority for you and Christianity if such errors and blatant mistranslations abound?

## WAS THE SIGN TO KING AHAZ 800 YEARS BEFORE YESHUA WAS BORN...OR FOR YOU 2800 YEARS LATER?

To put the question of Isaiah 7:14 in context, we need to consider to whom the "Lord Himself" was going to give a sign, which we can do so by simply going back to that time and place. This is one of the first rules of interpretation of Scripture in that passages must be interpreted both historically and contextually. To take out scissors and cut a passage out of it's intended meaning and catapulting it 700 to 800 years into the future in order to create a fulfilled prophecy is not the way to make sense out of the Bible.

Let us examine the context of the prophecy. King Ahaz of Judah was in a terrible state of mind when this prophecy was written as indeed he had every reason to be. His kingdom was shortly to be invaded by the King of Syria teamed with the northern Kingdom of Israel: "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of



Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it" (Isaiah 7:1 ). In Isaiah 7:3-7 we read that G-d sent the prophet Isaiah to meet Ahaz to tell him not to fear the alliance of Israel with Syria, and that He, the Elohim of Judah, would not allow any harm to come upon the nation at this time. To alleviate the king's fears, G-d was going to give him a sign.

Notice verse 11: "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy G-d; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." Now the king's reply didn't please G-d, as verse 12 makes clear.

Here was the Creator of the Universe offering not only to deliver Judah and King Ahaz, but to give comfort by performing a sign for reassurance! But, the wicked King Ahaz bluntly refused the offer! Here is G-d's reply in verse 14: **"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you (King Ahaz) a sign [of deliverance from the military threat]; Behold, ha'almah' [i.e., THE YOUNG WOMAN] shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL."**

**Answer for yourself:** Again, for what was this sign given? As assurance that Judah and its king should be delivered from their enemies!

## HOW DOES GENTILE CHRISTIANITY DEAL WITH THE QUOTE

Now consider the Christian explanation of this verse: it is that the sign would be the birth of the Messiah, which they claim was Yeshua! Can you imagine, if G-d was trying to comfort King Ahaz and the nation of Judah in the face of such adversity, **that He would offer a sign that was to come to pass nearly 700 to 800 years in the future? That is no comfort to them at all; they will never have seen it!** Well, that is what Christianity teaches when they maintain that this was a prophecy about the birth of Jesus Christ! Please understand that I am not trying to discount belief in Yeshua as Messiah or to denigrate his name; only to enlighten those who call themselves by his name of the terrible injustice they do to the truth that in the final analysis nullifies their witness to the Jewish people who **KNOW BETTER!**

G-d might as well have told Ahaz, "700 years from now, after you and all the people in the kingdom are dust in the ground, I will give you a sign that I will deliver Judah from this enemy that now threatens you." There would be little comfort in such a promise!

**Answer for yourself:** But let me ask you...was Israel delivered during the time of Yeshua (Yeshua) or after his lifetime? If anything, things got worse with the war of 70 C.E. and the ultimate defeat in 135 C.E. which would culminate with the banishment of the Jews themselves.

However, Matthew's account would have us believe that the birth of Yeshua was the sign from G-d to King Ahaz: "Now all this was done, **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, G-d with us" (1:22-23, KJV).

**Answer for yourself:** Can you see the utter nonsense of such a statement now? Would a Jew who knew better write such absurdness?

What the writer of the Gospel of Matthew and his assertion means in light of what the Scripture actually says is nonsense! **This is no inspiration or inerrancy or infallibility in this! What's more, the Hebrew word "harah" is past or perfect tense, "conceived," which in both Hebrew and English, represents past and completed action, and a number of rabbis have pointed this out to stubborn Christians!** The verse, understood properly in the Hebrew tense actually reads thus: **"Behold the young woman *has* conceived [is with child] and bears a son .."** (Drazin, Their Hollow Inheritance, pp. 172-174).

**Answer for yourself:** Do you now realize that in the Hebrew when the prophecy was given the woman had already has sex and had already conceived the baby in her womb and in just a short time, before the child grew to know right from wrong (maybe 2-3 years) G-d's presence (Immanuel) would be seen by all by His deliverance of King Ahaz from the military threat that worried him at the present and was pushing him to make alliances with pagans instead of depending upon G-d for his deliverance? How then could this be a sign for others 800 years later who would never see the women who conceived?

**Furthermore, the definite term "the young woman" indicates that King Ahaz personally knew the woman through whom the sign was to be given. It would hardly have been a sign to the king if some totally unknown woman bore a son and named him Immanuel about which Ahaz would have never known.** It would have to be someone the king knew as "the young woman" clearly indicates. In other words, at some point into the terrible situation confronting the kingdom, someone would come to the king and say, "by the way, your niece gave birth to a son today: she has named him Immanuel which means that G-d is with us." Suddenly King Ahaz would remember the words of Isaiah's prophecy! Suddenly, and perhaps finally, he would trust in G-d to deliver Judah from their enemies! The Collegeville Bible Commentary quite candidly speculates that the young woman in question was known to Ahaz, and notes that she may have well been one of the king's wives. p. 422.

"And she shall call his name Immanuel," which means "G-d is with us." What an absolutely clear statement! **Isaiah 7 doesn't say that G-d would be born "among us," but that He was "on our side": He would fight for Judah and deliver them from their enemies !**

This would be a good place to make another observation.

## **WHY CALL HIM YESHUA OR JESUS IF HE WAS TO BE CALLED IMMANUEL?**

**Answer for yourself:** Have you ever wondered why Yeshua or Joshua, his Hebrew name, wasn't called Immanuel if Isaiah 7 was a prophecy about the coming Messiah?

***The reason Yeshua was not called Immanuel was because Isaiah 7 is not a prophecy of a coming Messiah.***

All we have in the "Immanuel" prophecy is another case of the NT (Gentile) writers scouring the "Old" Testament in an effort to prove Yeshua's Messiahship, and they did so decidedly too late to rename Yeshua Immanuel!

## **SINFUL?...WELL FOR A CHRISTIAN IT CANNOT REFER TO YESHUA THEN**

This notwithstanding, let's lay to rest the claim that this is a prophecy of the coming Messiah by looking at verse 15 of chapter 7. **This Scripture tells us that the young child, Immanuel, would not, by any means, be perfect as we are told, according to Christian theology, that the sinless Yeshua was. "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good."** In other words, this little boy, Immanuel, was to learn, like all humans do, right from wrong by experience! Notice then verse 16: **"For before the child shall know to refuse the evil [ meaning he would be a sinner! ], and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Again, the child Immanuel was to be born as a sign to Ahaz, and before this imperfect, sinful little human child was two or three years old, Judah would be delivered from her enemies!**



If we go to II Kings 16:9 we see G-d delivered Judah as He had promised Ahaz! History tells us clearly that three years after the sign to King Ahaz (732 B.C.E.) Tiglath-Pileser III took Damascus, and executed the Syrian king and destroyed the Syrian kingdom, which rendered Israel completely powerless (Asimov's Guide to the Bible, pp. 375, 532). These events happening three years from the time of Isaiah's prophecy clearly spells out the meaning of Isaiah 7:16 and the identity of the child Immanuel! **What the Holy Scriptures and history clearly spell out is that Ahaz and Judah were delivered from their enemies, which means that the sign of the birth of the child Immanuel must have also come to pass. There is no prophecy here of a child being born almost 700 years in the future!** To understand that when G-d gave a promise of a sign that it was carried out immediately, notice II Kings 20:8 and II Kings 20:11, Judges 6:17 and Judges 6:21.

## **CHRISTIANITY'S ANSWER TO A DIFFICULT SITUATION...LET US CALL IT A "DUAL-PROPHECY"**

One can always deny the facts. One may never know them. I just laid them out for you. Furthermore, if one wants to find a way around these facts by claiming that this is a "dual" prophecy, which many ministers now preach, **then to be honest to the truth the entire chapter needs to be applied in this manner.** That is, we must understand that Yeshua did not live a sinless life because the child Immanuel had to learn to refuse evil and choose good. It is uncertain how the idea of "dual prophecy" came to be instituted in Christianity. Some churches rely very heavily upon the explanation of dual prophecy because it very often relieves them from discarding their erroneous theology and religious belief system and getting bogged down in questions that are unanswerable outside the duality argument. What duality of prophecy means, as taught by some Christian churches, is that prophecies, such as Isaiah 7, that can be shown to have come to pass before the advent of Christianity, will also be fulfilled at a later time. Of course, these ministers will arbitrarily pick and choose which Scriptures are "dual" based solely on their own interpretation of prophecy, itself a victim of their church's doctrine.

In addition we must believe that G-d delivered Judea from their enemies (meaning Rome) in the time of Yeshua. Just a quick check of Biblical history teaches otherwise.

## **CIRCULAR REASONING....IT IS ALWAYS UNRELIABLE**

To sum this discussion up, I would like to illustrate a typical tactic used by Christian writers when dealing with Isaiah chapter 11. Defending the Christian position that this is a prophecy about Yeshua, but not being able to explain the Scripture within its "OT" context, Christian writers often assert: **"The real key to understanding this remarkable prophecy of Isaiah is found in the New Testament."** They then proceeds to explain Isaiah 11 by using the Gospel of Matthew! Absolutely incredible! Not being able to prove the Messiahship of Yeshua from the true prophecies of Israel, these Christian ministers assures us that Yeshua was the Messiah by quoting other NT scriptures which can be proved to come from a corrupted and adulterated and debauched Greek translation of the Jewish Masoretic text. I guess what gets to me the most is that I don't want to or feel the need to lie to convince others of the Messiahship of Yeshua because G-d is author of Truth and not lies. Thus I and others with Bet Emet strive to rightly interpret the Word of G-d so that the Holy Spirit can witness to Truth. Such honors G-d and His Word. No honest G-d-fearing human being should present Yeshua as Messiah to Non-Jews as well as Jews using lies and historical untruths. It is only by the authority of Israel's sacred Scriptures, the Old Testament, that the Messiah can be understood! We should only teach Yeshua as fulfilling Scripture when he actually does, and not apply prophecies to him which never were fulfilled by Yeshua in the first place. More to follow. Shalom.



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## RABBINICAL COMMENTARY ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND ISAIAH 7:14-21

***“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold the young girl [Almah] is pregnant and gives birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel [God is with us].” [Isaiah 7:14]***

(14) “Therefore God will give you a sign,” meaning that since you do not want to ask a sign from Him, therefore God Himself, and no one else besides Him, without you even asking, will give you a sign. And ponder this: it writes “a sign,” not “miracle” or “wonder”, because since the Holy One did not intend to repeat this sign, it would be very different from the normal custom of things.

Since Ahaz and his men did not ask him, and without asking Ahaz did not deserve a major miracle, and if he escaped from the King of Aram and the King of Israel it was in the merit of his son **Chizkiyahu [Hezekiah]**, and in the merit of his ancestors, and in the merit of Jerusalem, and it was enough to save him, and not that the Blessed One should do other signs, wonders, and amazing things for him. And therefore [the Prophet] said: “The Lord will give you a sign.” That is to say a sign that this prophecy will not be forgotten by you.

And concerning this sign, I shall consider it in two ways. The first is when he said: “Behold the Almah is pregnant and will give birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel,” **meaning the wife of Ahaz or his daughter, whom he loved, was in the beginning of her pregnancy.** And perhaps Ahaz did not yet know this, and he told him that she is pregnant and would give birth to a son. **And that she herself would call his name Immanuel. And that would be the sign for him that the Blessed Lord is with him and would help him and save him from these kings (of Aram and Israel).**

**And Rashi explained that “Behold the Almah is pregnant” refers to the Prophet’s own wife.** And the sign was that she would give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel, signifying that the Lord would help them and save them. And this explanation is difficult, for it says “Almah” [young girl] and it would have been more appropriate to call her “Neviah” [Prophetess], as he said later on [Isaiah 8:3] “And I came near to the Prophetess”. **Therefore it is better to explain that Almah here refers to King Ahaz’s own wife or daughter.**

And behold he called her an Almah because she was young, because a young boy is called an Elem and a young girl Almah, **whether she is a virgin or a non-virginal married- or single-woman. For this term Almah only refers to her age [and not to her marital status].**

And given this, it is not right for us to consider that this son whom they called Immanuel was Chizkiyahu, for behold Chizkiyahu was born nine years before his father Ahaz became king. For Ahaz ruled for 16 years, and Chizkiyahu was 25 when he became king. And it appears that this prophecy of Isaiah occurred after Ahaz had ruled for 2 years. **But this Almah was a second wife whom Ahaz had taken after Chizkiyahu’s mother, and this prophesied son would be her son. Or she was the daughter of Ahaz, who had gotten married**



only recently and was still a young girl, the king's beloved daughter. And about her Isaiah prophesied that she was pregnant--and king Ahaz did not yet realize this--and that she would name him Immanuel with the urging of my God, so that this child should be a sign concerning the fate of the Nation of Israel.

And it is possible that the words "And she will call his name" refer back to Ahaz, and the Hebrew letter Tav in the word "VeKaraT" would be the Tav denoting "You will" and not the feminine Tav. To say that with all Ahaz's wickedness, he would call him this name Immanuel. And already a sign like this has been found in a Prince who came from the Land of Yehuda, who prophesied about the birth of Yoshiah, saying [1 Kings 13:2] "Behold a son is born to the House of David, Yoshia is his name." And this is the perfection of prophecy, that he should mention in it such a powerful detail concerning the future, and also that he will prophesy and testify in the naming of his name that this is God's choice and Will.

(15) "Butter and honey he will eat. He will knowingly despise the evil and choose the good." To teach that this child will be taught by his nursemaid to eat butter and honey, so that from training and custom he will know early on to despise the evil and to choose the good. Meaning that since he will be accustomed to eating sweet and desirous things like butter and honey, his nature will be conformed with that sweet food that he is used to and to despise the evil that is its opposite.

(16) "For before the youth will know to despise the evil and to choose the good, the land will be left desolate that you fear from its two kings." And he mentioned that even as the child hurries to become accustomed to despising the evil and to choosing the good, still in that time that hastens to come "before the youth knows to despise the evil and to choose the good" with all the powerful instruction that his caretakers give to him, "the land will be left desolate" meaning that the land of Israel, for whom Ahaz feared due to the two Kings, meaning the king of Aram and the King of Israel that were coming to attack him. And there is no doubt that even though this prophecy was at the beginning of the pregnancy of the Queen or the king's daughter, there still was time until she would give birth and until the child would be accustomed to choose and to desire to eat the good and sweet and pleasant things, and to despise their opposite, of about two years. And this prophecy was before the Kings attacked Jerusalem, about the same amount of time for the child's birth and the development of his judgement, then if so this prophecy testifies to his salvation.

And it seems to me more correct that "the Land will be left desolate" was said not about the Land of Judah, but rather about the Kingdom of Aram and Israel, whose two kings Ahaz feared. And the prophet informed him that before the youth would know to despise the evil and to choose the good, the land of Aram would be desolated of Retzin, for the king of Assyria would attack him and kill him and take his Land from him, and also the Shomron and Land of Israel [the northern kingdom] would be desolated of Pekach ben Remaliah, who would be killed by Hoshea ben Elah, and the lands that they ruled over would be rid of them.

And after Isaiah mentioned this salvation, he mentioned another salvation that would be in the days of Chizkiyahu his son. That Sancheriv King of Assyria would attack Jerusalem to destroy it, and the Blessed Lord would save the city. And this is that he meant in saying:

- (17) The Lord will bring upon you and upon your People and upon the House of your Fathers days that have not been since Ephraim turned from Yehuda." Meaning since the Kingdoms were divided. And he explained what God would bring, and he said that the King of Assyria would attack Jerusalem, and then he added the words:
- (18) "And it will be on that day the Lord will call for a fly on the edge of the Nile in Egypt and for a bee in the Land of Assyria." And he mentioned the downfall of Sancheriv saying:
- (20) "On that day the Lord will shave like a razor with the mercenaries in the lands of the river of the King of Assyria." And behold the prophet did not say that this would be in the days of his son Chizkiyahu, because he did not want to identify the righteous Chizkiyahu as the son of the wicked Ahaz. So wrote Rashi, and this is the first explanatory approach.

And the Second approach is that this sign was of the salvation of the Nation from their enemies. And that God would help them and they would eat and be satisfied and enjoy abundant peace. And it already is written in Scriptures that a sign would be given about this. In the words of David [Psalms 86:15-16] “Turn to me and show me grace. Give Your power to Your servant and save the son of Your maidservant. Show me a sign of favor, and let my enemies fear and be ashamed. For You God helped me and comforted me.” Behold he called the salvation and consolation “a sign”. And so you will find in the words of Isaiah himself, who said to Chizkiyahu about his salvation from the hand of Sancheriv [Isaiah 37:30]: “And this is the sign for you. Eat this year that which grows of its own, and so in the second year, and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit.” And the remnant of the daughter of Yehuda that is left will make a root below and fruit above.” And he calls it a sign this salvation and that God will be bountiful to them in the land afterwards.

“Therefore God Himself will give you a sign.” And the sign is not the pregnancy and birth of the Almah. Rather that God will give you a sign of your salvation from your enemies. Not just this time from the hands of Retzin and ben Remaliah. But also from the hands of Sancheriv, who will attack Jerusalem in the days of Chizkiyahu. And after all this they will eat the goodness of the Land. And therefore he said in order to clarify the sign that he mentioned and when it would be: “Behold the Almah is pregnant and gives birth to a son” meaning “You will surely know that the girl who was the wife or daughter of Ahaz as I mentioned before—behold even though she is only a young girl behold she already is pregnant and will give birth to a son, and she will call his name Immanuel, because in his days the Blessed Lord will be with Israel. And will save them from their afflictions. And therefore he said: “He will eat butter and honey” to say that two successes and two salvations will occur in his days. And as though he is a messenger of God on earth to announce the good news and to inform what He will do for the people. For the butter is one type of sweet and desirable thing, and the honey is another type. And they correspond to the two successes and salvations: one from the two kings rising against them: Retzin King of Aram and Pekach ben Remaliah King of Israel, who will be wiped out of the Book of Life and will be uprooted from their Kingdoms in a short while. And the second from the hands of Sancheriv, who will attack Jerusalem afterwards and will fill the whole land of Judah with his people and his soldiers. And God will cut them off speedily from the face of the earth, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And the reason he said “to know to despise the evil and to choose the good” is to teach the time period, as in Genesis 7:4 “in only seven more days.” And he said “from the day Ephraim turned from Yehuda” to say that in the same time that this child will learn to despise the evil and to choose the good, he will eat butter and honey.” Meaning Israel will eat, as it says later (Isaiah 8:4) “he will take up the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Shomron before the King of Assyria.” For Scripture sometimes omits the subject. And the point here is that every member of Israel will eat butter and honey, for there will be great plenty, and peace, and security, and the butter and honey will be plentiful, as will the other forms of success that they symbolize. Or that the child himself in his childhood will eat butter and honey as a sign and good omen, for the people of Judah will eat in peace and contentment all the days of this child. And Rashi favors this explanation, for he wrote: “butter and honey the child will eat, for our Land will be filled with all good.”

**Answer for yourself:** Now does this context remind you of Israel in the day of Yeshua and the Romans? Of course not!

And behold the Prophet immediately explained what are the two successes that the butter and honey symbolize. And of the first he said, “Before the child knows to despise the evil and to choose the good, the Land will be desolated” meaning that while the child is still a child, before he knows to choose the good and to despise the evil, Retzin and Pekach ben Remaliah will be killed and the Land that is their kingdom will be bereft of them, of whom Ahaz feared. And this is the first success that will occur speedily while the child still is young. And then he mentioned the second success that will come after that, about which he said: “God will bring upon you and upon your People and upon the House of your Fathers” meaning that a different siege and dire straits will come upon them, and this would be in the days of Chizkiyahu when Sancheriv would come against him. And about this he said “And it will be on that day God will call a fly...” and he mentioned again his downfall saying: “on



that day God will shave like a razor with the mercenaries...” and he mentioned after this the joy of Israel and their success and their satisfaction in the Land saying (7:21-22): “And it will be on that day that a man will raise a calf and two sheep, and from the overabundance of the milk he will eat butter, for everyone who is left in the midst of the Land will eat butter and honey. And this was the favorable sign that God would give them, and to which he intended in saying “butter and honey will he eat” as I have mentioned....

*And the Christian Scholars have struggled to refute that this young girl [Almah] would be the wife of Ahaz or the wife of Isaiah, and they asked many difficult questions about this, and I thought to mention their claims here and to answer them in order to remove a stumbling block from the path of my People.*

(1) The first doubt is that if the Almah was the wife of Ahaz then the son born would be Chizkiyahu his son. And it is proven that he already was born before this prophecy, and that the prophecy should refer to him after his birth is not possible. And if the Almah was the wife of Isaiah, how did he say after this (Isaiah 8:8): “And the poles of his wings will fill the breadth of your land Immanuel” which teaches that Immanuel will be the ruler of the Land, and Isaiah and his son were never such?

And I answer that I already have explained that Immanuel was not Chizkiyahu. For he already was born nine years before his father Ahaz reigned. But he was another son who was born to Ahaz from another wife, or the Almah was Ahaz’s daughter. And the verse that the Christians cite—“will fill the breadth of your Land Immanuel”—does not teach that Immanuel will be Lord of the Land as they claim. For the simple reading of the verse is that the army of Sancheriv will invade Yehuda, and would flood the Land until the throat “and the poles of his wings will fill the breadth of your Land Immanuel”, meaning that the poles of the soldiers of Sancheriv will fill the whole breadth of the Land of Yehuda when they would attack her. And of this they should not be afraid, for God is with them, as is explained in the commentary. Not that he says that the poles of the wings of Immanuel will fill the breadth of the land, for this is an error in the explanation of the simple meaning of the Scripture *fed. note: it seems to me that the fact that the verse writes “your Land Immanuel” implies that Immanuel indeed is the ruler of that Land.*

(2) And the second doubt is that if the prophet said to Ahaz (7:11) “Ask a sign to the depths or to the heights” *fed. note: could this be an allusion to what is written in Romans 10:6-8?* that the sign should be great and powerful, what was the power and strength of this sign “Behold the Almah is pregnant and will give birth to a son” for the Medical Sages can recognize through the appearance of a woman and through her urine if she is pregnant and if she is carrying a boy or a girl? And I answer this that according to both of my approaches to explaining the verses above no place is left for this doubt according to the meaning of the word “sign” and its portent and the intent of the Prophet’s words.

(3) And the third doubt is that Hoshea ben Elah reigned in the 12th year of Ahaz, as mentioned in 2 Kings 17:1, and Pekach ben Remaliah already had died, and it is clear from this that when Immanuel was born Retzin and Pekach ben Remaliah already had died in the fourth or fifth year of Ahaz’ reign? And I answer that it is not obligatory that since Hoshea ben Elah was crowned in the 12th year of Ahaz King of Yehuda then Retzin and Pekach ben Remaliah already were dead at the time of this prophecy.

For in 2 Kings 15:27 it is written that Pekach ben Remaliah ruled for 20 years, and it is written there (15:16) also that in the days of Yotam King of Yehuda, father of Ahaz, God began to unleash on Yehuda Retzin King of Aram and Pekach ben Remaliah, and in those days Yotam died and in the 17th year of Pekach’s reign Ahaz became King of Yehuda (16:1). And if so there remain 3 years from the reign of Pekach ben Remaliah in the days of the reign of Ahaz and ben Remaliah, and during this time Retzin and ben Remaliah were terminated. Therefore they Prophet predicted to Ahaz “that before the child would know to despise the evil and to choose

the good the land would be left desolate.” Meaning that this would happen in those 3 years during which those Kings were killed and uprooted from their kingdoms. Behold therefore that there is no contradiction here at all. And this prophecy was not in the fourth or fifth year of Ahaz’s reign, as the Christian Sages claim, but rather in the first or second year of his reign, for at that time Retzin and Pekach ben Remaliah joined together to attack him because of the war they already had been waging with Ahaz’s father (Yotam) before his death.

(4) And the fourth doubt is that behold he wrote after this about this child “that before the lad would know to call ‘My Father My Mother’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Shomron would be taken up before the king of Assyria.” And we don’t find that the King of Assyria despoiled the Shomron except when he destroyed it, in the 9th year of Hoshea ben Elah, when Ahaz already had died and his son Chizkiyahu had reigned for 6 years?

And I answer this that if these Christian men understood the simple and true meaning of prophecies this doubt would not concern them at all. For the lad of whom it is said “before he will know to despise the evil and to choose the good” they thought is the same lad of whom it is said afterwards (8:1): “And God said to me take up a scroll...for before the lad knows to say My Father My Mother...” And this is not so with us, for these are two distinct children one from the other. And these two prophecies were not stated at the same time. For the first prophecy that began “And so it was in the days of Ahaz” and the prophecy “And God will add another word to Ahaz” and the following sections all were in the days of Ahaz and the beginning of his reign, as I have mentioned. And the pregnant girl was a young wife that Ahaz took or his daughter, as I have explained. And the child who will eat butter and honey will be her son, and this child will be in the days of Ahaz. However, the section “And God said to me take a scroll...” and the scripture “And I drew near to the Prophetess and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son...” was years afterwards. And the prophet did not prophesy here concerning saving King Ahaz from the two kings as he had prophesied in the first prophecy [in Isaiah 7]. But he prophesied only about the destruction of Damascus and the destruction of the Shomron that occurred afterwards. And the prophetess was Isaiah’s wife, and the son born here was her son. And therefore the first child was called Immanuel to announce the salvation of the Nation and its success. And the second child, son of the prophet Isaiah, was called “Maher Shalal Chash Baz” because his purpose was to prophesy the destruction of Damascus and the destruction of the Shomron, and the two prophecies had nothing to do with one another. And if the destruction of Damascus was in the days of Ahaz, when Pillan King of Assyria attacked it and killed Retzin and conquered Damascus, as mentioned in 2 Kings 16:9. And the destruction of the Shomron was after the death of Ahaz in the 6th year of his son Chizkiyahu’s reign, this does not refute that the son born to the Prophet Isaiah would portend and teach about the destruction of both Damascus and Shomron, since they were years apart in time, since for that reason they called him two names: “Maher Shalal, Chash Baz” to teach about the two destructions, as I shall explain....

## THE RABBIS REJECT THE CHRISTIAN VIRGIN BIRTH

And the Christians claim in the book of the Apostle Matthew that what is written “God will give you a sign. Behold the Almah is pregnant and gives birth to a son and will call his name Immanuel” refers to Miriam, who became pregnant while still a virgin, and gave birth to Yeshua their God, and for that reason he is called Immanuel [God is with us]. And there are seven refutations to this:

(1) That the word “Behold” teaches about something that will take place immediately, as in (Genesis 15:4) “And behold the word of God came to him saying this one will not inherit from you.” (Song of Songs 2:8) “Behold this one comes.” (Isaiah 12:2) “Behold God is my salvation, I shall trust...” For the word “Behold” (Hinay) is related to the word Hineni (I am here and ready). And how could the verse say “Behold the young girl” concerning something that would happen in the end of days? Rather it would have written “And it will be in the end of days” or something similar from those types of expressions that refer to distant times.

(2) From what is written “Behold the Almah” and the Christian commentators thought that there is no word “Almah” in Scripture except to mean “virgin,” as they proved from what is written about Rebecca (Genesis



26:43) “Almah” and that she was “a virgin and no man had known her.” (Genesis 26:16) And also about Miriam, the sister of Aharon, it says (Exodus 2:8) “Almah” since she was a girl and a virgin. And so they decreed that the word “Almah” must mean “Virgin.” And this is not so, for it is clear to every Jew that this name in the Holy Tongue does not refer to virgin, but also can mean a non-virgin. And the proof is in Proverbs 30:18-20: “Three things are wondrous to me...the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the heart of the sea, and the way of a man with an “Almah.” And the next verse says “So also the way of an adulterous woman who ate and wiped her mouth and said ‘I did no sin.’” And this is a clear proof that here “Almah” is stated about a non-virgin, of whom it cannot be ascertained if a man lay with her and she became defiled or not. And to be saved from this doubt some of the Christian Scholars have written that “the way of a man with an Almah” meaning in his Elem (youth), as though the Hebrew word “beAlmah” was written with an Aleph at the end, but this is not so for it is a Hay. And some of them tried to explain symbols in the words of King Solomon, from the eagle, the snake, and the ship, that are symbols that pertain to Yeshua in his Divinity, in order to explain “the way of a man with an Almah” meaning that He entered the womb of the virgin. But they could not then explain in this manner the next verse: “So also is the way of an adulterous woman...”

(3) From what is written “Behold the Almah is pregnant” and the word “pregnant” is in present tense. That she already was pregnant, not that she would become pregnant 600 years afterwards. And if the Prophet were speaking of the future, he should have said: “Behold the Almah will become pregnant” as it says later (8:3) “and she will become pregnant and give birth to a son,” and not “is pregnant” in the present tense.

(4) “And she will call his name Immanuel.” And it is known that no one called Yeshua the Nazarene by the name Immanuel, not his mother, and not by others. And the Christian scholars already have tried to answer this, saying that “something has both an essential name and an appellate name. As a man’s name is his essential name, while his appellate name reveals details about his life. And Yeshua was his nickname, but Immanuel was his essential name referring to his Divinity.” And these words are vanity, because Scripture would not say about the essential name “And she will call his name Immanuel” but rather the appellate name, for [the Prophet adjures them and] they agree to call him this name. And of the essential name it is written (Genesis 2:19) “This is his name.” And so it should be written here: “And his name will be Immanuel” not “And she will call his name Immanuel” which indicates that he should and will be called by that name....

(5) “For before the lad will know to despise the evil and to choose the good” for this contradicts what the Christians believe, that Yeshua from the time he was born was wise to the greatest perfection. And this they also answered, saying that while Yeshua as God was wise from the beginning of his conception, yet as a physical being the wisdom was hidden from him for a brief time. And this also is a false assertion, for if Yeshua was God behold the power of God is unlimited. And how could the limitations of physicality impede him? And how could the Divine in him be limited, if he is the essential power of God?

(6) “The land that you fear will be left desolate of its two kings.” This verse is a self-explanatory contradiction to their claims, for if Ahaz was afraid of Retzin and ben Remaliah, and concerning this the Prophet gave him a sign, to assure him that his heart would not become soft or fearful, how could the sign refer to Miriam and her virginity and the conception of God? For the affliction was close at hand, but the sign would then refer to an event 600 years later. And they also tried to resolve this doubt, saying: this sign was not to confirm the prophecy given to Ahaz, but rather to notify him of an even greater miracle that God would do in the world. And therefore they said this to the House of David, to inform them that from their family would come Miriam, who would give birth to God, and that this would be a consequence, not a miraculous sign, of the salvation of Ahaz.

And also this claim is groundless, because in the beginning the Prophet said to Ahaz: “Ask a sign from the Lord your God, in the depths or in the heights.” And there is no doubt that the sign concerned his security from those kings. And when Ahaz answered him “I shall not ask and not test God” the Prophet said to him: “Therefore God Himself will give you a sign” and this shows that this sign was the same one that he told him to ask for originally. And therefore it was not a prediction of what would occur, and not of a bigger miracle to

come, but rather a sign of that prophecy and security that he told him about. And therefore it is mandatory for the sign to occur before the time of the security that he promised Ahaz, since its purpose was to enable him to believe in the prophesied security.

**Answer for yourself:** And how could a person with any intelligence say that “before the lad knows to despise the evil and to choose the good the Land will be left desolate” refers to Yeshua, since those two kings died and left their lands 600 years before Yeshua’s birth?

We also found that the Prophet predicted to Chizkiyahu his salvation from Sancheriv, and also his escape from death and his recovery from his illness. And he gave him on all this signs and wonders in the Heavens and the earth. And he mentioned nothing of the conception of God. For what has this to do with this?

(7) The seventh doubt is from the continuation of the verses “God will bring upon you and upon your People and upon your Father’s House days that did not come since the day Ephraim turned from Yehuda: the king of Assyria.” For this shows that the Prophet did not budge from the matter of Ahaz with those kings who were attacking Jerusalem. And so he mentioned afterwards Sancheriv’s attack against her in the days of his son Chizkiyahu.

**Answer for yourself:** And how can the human mind tolerate that the Prophet should place, in between these two predictions that pertain to the immediate time and place, another prediction that has nothing to do with this period, but in the distant future? And what else need I add to negate this peculiar idea, since it has no support either in logic or in the Scriptural verses themselves.





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## DUAL PROPHECY, VIRGIN BIRTH, AND JESUS? FULFILLED OR UNFULFILLED?

One of the methods that should be used to correctly interpret Scripture or Prophecy is to examine the text within the CONTEXT of where it is written. Possibly no greater example can be found for this truth than the seventh chapter of Isaiah because when this chapter is viewed within the historical context in which it was written then absolutely it cannot be a prophecy about Jesus' virgin birth because it suggests that the prophecy was to have been fulfilled in Ahaz's lifetime, some 700 years before Jesus.

In spite of that often Christian commentators will label this Isa. 7:14 prophecy a "Dual Prophecy" which finds its fulfillment not only in the days of King Ahaz but in the days of Jesus as well. Some maintain that Isa. 7:14 is a "double prophecy;" a prophecy about a boy to be born in the days of Ahaz and also a prophecy to the birth of Jesus. The context is only for the first application of this double prophecy.

Answer for yourself: What is the truth on the matter?

First we must become familiar with the passages in question so let's take time to read from Isaiah chapter 7:

*And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, marched on Jerusalem to wage war against it, and he could not wage war against it. It was told to the House of David, saying, Aram has allied itself with Ephraim, and his heart and the heart of his people trembled as the trees of the forest tremble because of the wind. The Lord said to Isaiah, Now go out toward Ahaz, you and Shear-Yashuv your son to the edge of the conduit of the upper pool, to the road of the washers field, and you shall say to him, Feel secure and calm yourself, do not fear, and let your heart not be faint because of these two smoking stubs of firebrands, because of the raging anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. Since Aram planned harm to you, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying: Let us go up against Judah and provoke it, and annex it to us; and let us crown a king in its midst, one who is good for us. So said the Lord God, Neither shall it succeed, nor shall it come to pass . . . . The Lord continued to speak to Ahaz, saying, Ask for yourself a sign from the Lord, your God; ask it either in the depths, or in the heights above. Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not test the Lord. Then he said, Listen now, O House of David, is it little for you to weary men, that you weary my God as well? Therefore the Lord, of His own, shall give you a sign: Behold the young woman is with child, and she shall bear a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel. Cream and honey he shall eat when he knows to reject bad and choose good; for, when the lad does not yet know to reject bad and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread, shall be abandoned.*

When done reading not only the above verses but the entire chapter then it should be very apparent to the reader that Isaiah chapter 7 is Isaiah's prophecy and declaration of the forthcoming unsuccessful siege of

Jerusalem by the two armies of the Kingdoms of Israel and Syria and not a prophecy concerning a virgin birth more than 700 years later. Now you need to think and use your mind that G-d gave you as you approach the next question.

**Answer for yourself:** If we interpret this chapter, as some professing Christian scholars attest, as referring to Jesus' birth, then what possible comfort and assurance would Ahaz, who was surrounded by to overwhelming military enemies, have found in the birth of a child seven centuries later? The profoundness of such a question should stop both you and these supposed Christian scholar dead in their tracks as its implications are staggering and questions the intelligence of G-d no less! Both King Ahaz and his people would have been long dead and buried and never had seen such a sign. Such a proposition is plumb stupid! Such a sign would make no sense.

Let us now move on to another part of the verse; in particular verses 15-16 which state that by the time this child reaches the age of maturity ("he knows to reject bad and choose good"), the two warring kings, Pekah and Rezin, will have been removed.

**Answer for yourself:** Was this part of Isaiah's prophecy of the demise of these kings by the time that a "born child" maturity realized historically? Do you understand that if it can be proven that these kings were removed then the "child in question" had to be born already?

II Kings 15-16 reveal to us that this prophecy was fulfilled when these two kings were suddenly assassinated. With an understanding of the context of Isaiah 7:14 alone along with the historical removal of these two kings as military threats to King Ahaz, then it becomes very evident that the child born in Isaiah 7:14 is not referring to Jesus or to any future virgin birth. Rather, the prophecy as Isaiah received it from G-d is referring to the divine protection that Ahaz and his people would enjoy from their impending destruction at the hands of these two enemies, the northern Kingdom of Israel and Syria.

Now some Christian commentators maintain that this is a "Dual Prophecy." They attempt to explain away this alarming problem of Matthew's complete indifference to the biblical context of Isaiah 7:14 by claiming that Isaiah's words to Ahaz had two different applications. They agree with my contention that the first application of Isaiah's prophecy must have been addressed to Ahaz and his immediate crisis. That child that was born contemporaneously and the first leg of this dual prophecy was fulfilled at the time of Ahaz, 2,700 years ago.

But here is where they disagree. They maintain, however, that the second leg of this dual prophecy applied to Jesus' virgin birth less than 2,000 years ago. In short, these Christians claim that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled twice: once in 732 B.C.E., and a second time in the year 1 C.E.

**Answer for yourself:** This sounds plausible; but is it? What are the problems that surround such hypothetical situation of such a "dual prophecy"?

Without realizing it such a scenario creates an enormous amount of problems.

- First of all, the proposal of dual prophecy is entirely contrived and has no basis in the Bible. Nowhere in the seventh chapter of Isaiah does the text even hint of a second fulfillment. The notion of a dual prophecy is thoroughly unbiblical and was fashioned in order to explain away a stunning theological problem.
- Secondarily, if, as some Christians maintain, the word *ha'almah* means a "virgin," and, as they insist, Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled twice, then there had to be two virgin births.
  - **Answer for yourself:** Who was the first virgin to conceive in Ahaz's time?
  - **Answer for yourself:** Were there two virgin births?
  - **Answer for yourself:** That is to say, if these Christians claim that the virgin birth of Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled twice, who then was the first virgin having a baby boy in 732 B.C.E.?
  - **Answer for yourself:** Where is the record of that major event? Should it not have drawn some attention and be written in some record somewhere?
  - **Answer for yourself:** With the Hebrew Scriptures chronicling the many miracles worked by G-d for



Israel when why is not mentioned among the sacred Hebrew Scriptures as are the many others?

- **Answer for yourself:** Is Christianity by taking this "dual prophecy" approach claiming that Mary was not the first and only virgin to conceive and give birth to a child?

Consider with me for a minute that these Christians insist that the word *ha'almah* can only mean virgin. They are snared by the words of their mouth since they refuse to use the real meaning of the Hebrew word "almah" which does not mean "virgin" but only "young woman." To force such a meaning to "almah" as meaning "virgin" when it does not along with a proposed "dual prophecy" means that there has to be two virgin births as well. History is completely silent as well as all of Jewish history on such an event.

- **Thirdly, if Christianity claims the seventh chapter of Isaiah is a dual prophecy, how does Isaiah 7:15-16 apply to Jesus when these verses continue to speak of this lad?**

Remember, Isaiah 7:14-16 reads

*Therefore the Lord, of His own, shall give you a sign, "Behold the young woman is with child, and she shall bear a son, **and** she shall call his name Immanuel. Cream and honey he shall eat when he knows to reject bad and choose good; for, when the lad does not yet know to reject bad and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread, shall be abandoned.*

- **Answer for yourself:** If Isaiah's words are the substance of a dual prophecy, at what age did the baby Jesus mature?
- **Answer for yourself:** Which were the two kingdoms during Jesus' lifetime that were abandoned?
- **Answer for yourself:** Who dreaded the Kingdom of Israel during the first century when there had not been a Kingdom of Israel in existence since the seventh century B.C.E.? Surely it was not Rome with their military might!
- **Answer for yourself:** Besides the prophecy of the birth of a child when or where was Jesus ever called Immanuel as required also by this prophecy?
- **Answer for yourself:** When did Jesus eat cream and honey? Does any of this make any sense to you?

I would think by now that this is beginning to add up. If you have been a student of Bet Emet Ministries for any length of time then you KNOW that Christianity and its hermeneutic [interpretation] of the Hebrew Scriptures are not only flawed concerning Isaiah 7 but is flawed concerning a great part of the Hebrew Scriptures. This as you have seen is not just "another rendering" but a purposeful attempt to alter the Hebrew Revelation to suite the theological agenda of the Gentile Church which did not want to live under the Law of G-d. Back to our point the whole of their interpretation of Isaiah chapter 7 according to traditional Christian tradition just does not add up because this argument of a dual prophecy was born out of the desperation of Christianity when confronted by the Jewish people and their scholars who know their own Scriptures better than Rome will ever know them. **All of the forged and altered translations of the Hebrew Scriptures found in our Christian Bibles that are nothing more than purposeful mistranslation, misquotations, creations, and verses purposefully taken out of context in order to foist upon the unsuspecting Gentile world of yesteryear a replacement religion and in so doing they destroyed much of the Divine Revelation and many of the truths concerning the Jewish Messiah and the historical Jesus as well.**

## GOOD NEWS ON THE HORIZON

Things, they be a changing. It does my heart good to see that several Christian Bible translations today are reversing the error of their predecessors and translating "almah" and Isaiah chapter 7 correctly concerning the Hebrew. These newer translations are taking note of the forgery of Isa. 7:14 as found in the Septuagint [the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures]. They are no longer going with the forged Greek Septuagint and the following translations attest to the renewed integrity of current Christian commentators and translators. May they be blessed of G-d for their honesty and efforts that go against the current of tradition Catholic

**tradition.**

**Revised Standard Version**

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

**Revised English Bible**

*Because you do, the Lord of his own accord will give you a sign; it is this: A young woman is with child, and she will give birth to a son and call him Immanuel.*

**New English Bible**

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: A young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

**New Revised Standard Version**

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.*

**The Message of the Bible**

*He will give you a sign. A young woman shall bear a son who shall truly represent the hopes we have inherited from the days of David. His very name, God-is-with-us, shall express the secret of his power.*

**New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures**

*(Jehovah Witnesses) Therefore Jehovah himself will give you men a sign: Look! The maiden herself will actually become pregnant, and she is giving birth to a son, and she will certainly call his name Immanuel.*

**Good News Bible**

*Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: A young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him "Immanuel."*

**The Jerusalem Bible: Readers Edition**

*The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: The maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.*

**The Bible: :A New Translation**

*An omen you shall have, and that from the Eternal himself. There is a young woman with child, who shall bear a son and call his name Immanuel (God is with us).*

**The Bible: :An American Translation**



*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold! A young woman is with child, and is about to bear a son; and she will call him God is with us.*

**The International Critical Commentary**

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a damsel is with child, and shall bring forth a son, and call his name Immanuel.*

**The New Jerusalem Bible**

*The Lord will give you a sign in any case. It is this: The young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.*

**The Layman's Bible Commentary**

*In reply, Isaiah says that the Lord will provide a sign. It will be a most unusual and remarkable event. A young woman shall bear a son and name him Immanuel, meaning God is with us.*

**World Biblical Commentary**

*Therefore my Lord himself will give you (plural) a sign. Behold, the woman shall conceive and bearing a son -- she shall call his name Immanuel.*

**The Bible in Basic English**

*For this cause the Lord himself will give you a sign; a young woman is now with child, and she will give birth to a son, and she will give him the name Immanuel.*

*Now you know the truth of the matter.....blessings... Craig M. Lyons M.Div.*



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# VIRGIN BIRTH FINDS IT FOUNDATION IN SUN WORSHIP AND SUN MYTHS

Much of the life Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, are nothing more than allegorical representations of the Sun God. Long before Jesus the Ancients formulated their Mythology (Religion), after the Image of Astronomical Phenomena. They saw this as the best way to connect with the Creator God, that is by patterning their religious rituals in accordance with the most visible and observable aspect of God's creation, the Cosmos. Many of the stories and accounts in the life of Jesus in the New Testament are actually various dramas (metaphorical representations) of Solar Mythology. We are presently focusing on the Solar-Lunar aspects of ancient mythology and modern religion. We shall at this point commence a dissection of the New Testament gospels. As done previously, I wish to evaluate the most salient and popular episodes within these scriptures and show their parallel to the lives of the other mythical saviors that we have already discussed. **And we will illustrate that much within the Gospels are analogous to Solar Mythology.** Let me say this is done only to separate the lies and falsehoods from the truth about Jesus so those who follow him and his example can do so in truth.

First, we have the miraculous conception of a virgin.

**Mat 1:18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

**Mat 1:19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

**Mat 1:20** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

**Mat 1:21** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

**Mat 1:22** Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

**Mat 1:23** Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

## THE ASTRONOMICAL ANALOGY

The astronomical explanation of the first three points is as follows, The Miraculous Conception, as I explained in a previous article, refers to the Conjugation (Conception) that annually takes place at the vernal equinox. God, the Father, the Sun personified, at this time (the vernal equinox) is joined (the crossing of the celestial equator and the ecliptic of the sun) to commence the Gestation of the Son (Sun) of God (Father Sun), that will be born 280 days later on December 25th.



The ancients felt that an offspring of a god, a son of god, should have a purer maternal origin than mortals, and this was evidence of his supernatural or divine origin. A man, even if he were thought of as a god, had to be born of a woman, and this could not be concealed, but paternal parentage is never so obvious, being known only to the mother, if anyone.

The purity of his maternal parentage required these Gentile Saviors to be born of a pure woman—a maiden. Hence, the Gentile saviours often were born of virgins and this "concept" continued even for the Gentile redactors of the New Testament. Besides normal conception ordinary birth was also too ignominious for a god. It had to be spotless, or immaculate. Jesus Christ in an apocryphal gospel, like Krishna was born through his mother's side, rather than the impure route. Though not in the canonical works, some of the Christian fathers endorsed this story. I have even read Catholic dogma where it testifies that Jesus was born not through Mary's vagina, the normal birth canal, but through her navel!

Not only saviours but famous men, like Plato, Pythagoras, Alexander, Augustus and others, were thought to have been born miraculously. Plato was born of Paretonia, begotten of Apollo, not Ariston, his father, according to one authority.

The doctrine of immaculate conception is ancient but the manner of the holy conception was different in different countries. Zoroaster was immaculately conceived by a ray from the Divine Reason or Word and this was adopted by medieval artists.

But the idea of being overshadowed by the Holy Ghost seems to have been most current. god, the father of a god was believed to overshadow the mother of a god, to impregnate her. In 550 BC, Pythais, the mother of Pythagoras, conceived by a spectre or ghost of the god Apollo, the Sun-god.

**Answer for yourself:** Does the ghost of the sun god differ in principle from the Christian Holy Ghost?.

Juno of Rome grew pregnant at the touch of a flower to give birth to Mars. No impregnation could have been purer. So the most immaculate conception of all was that of the god of War! If it sounds absurd, how is it more senseless than conception by a ghost? Botany has shown that, at least, a flower can fertilize other flowers but no science has yet investigated the virility of ghosts.

The Greek Juno, Hera, was immaculately impregnated by the wind to give birth to Vulcan. Here is a close parallel indeed for the word habitually translated as spirit or ghost in the scriptures and continued into the Greek of the New Testament really means breath or wind! So literally the virgin Mary was impregnated by the wind just like Hera. The author of the Perennial Calendar tells us the miraculous conception of Juno Jugulis, the blessed virgin queen of heaven, fell on the second of February, the day of the early Christian festival of the date of the conception of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary.

A Chinese sect worshiped a saviour known as Xaca, who was conceived of his mother, Maia, by a white elephant, which she saw in her sleep, and for greater purity, she brought him forth from one of her sides. In Chinese popular religion, the virgin mother Shing-Mon gave birth to the god Yu from a conception by a water lily. The procreative refinement evinced here is equal to that of Juno. In another story Yu was conceived of a star!

Tamerlane's mother conceived having had sexual intercourse with the god of Day. The mother of Ghengis Khan, being too modest to claim that she was the mother of the son of god, said only that he was the son of the sun.

Osiris of Egypt and even Julius Caesar were immaculately conceived—the latter being the son of the beautiful virgin Cronis Celestine, and begotten by the Father of all gods, Jupiter. His heir and nephew, Augustus Caesar, was curiously his half brother, as another son of Jove, by whose divine lust he was immaculately conceived in the temple of Apollo.



Both **Buddha and Chrishna**, of India, were immaculately conceived. The mother of Chrishna was overshadowed by the supreme god, Brahma, and the Holy Ghost was Naraan. Chrishna's mother had given birth seven times previously but remained a virgin. Philostratus, a disciple of Apollonius of Cappadocia, who was contemporary with Jesus Christ, tells that **Damis, the mother of Apollonius**, gave birth to this god and rival saviour of Jesus Christ, by being overshadowed by the god, **Proteus**.

Several of the virgin mothers of gods and great men go ten months between conception and delivery.

Plainly the tradition of the miraculous conceptions of gods, sons of gods, saviours and messiahs was prevalent in the world from ancient times on, beginning long before the mother of **Jesus** was overshadowed by the ghostly representative of the Most High. The belief in immaculate conception extended to every nation in the world. Grote, referring to Greece, declares that the furtive pregnancy of young women, often by a god, is one of the most frequently recurring incidents in the legendary narratives of the country.

Both the prevalence and antiquity of the idea of immaculate conception among the heathen is conceded by earlier Christian writers in their arguments from precedents of the divinity of Christ. St. Augustine, Origen and Lactanius tried to persuade us of the immaculate virginity of the mother of Jesus Christ by the example of similar pagan events. **The doctrine of immaculate conception is, then, conceded as long anterior to Christ and therefore not unique in his case.**

## PROBLEMS WITH THIS DOCTRINE

- The gospels show that Christ himself did not claim to have a miraculous birth. He did not once allude to it, though as the principal evidence of his divinity, as Christians claim, he would have done so.
- His paternal genealogy, as made out by Matthew and Luke, completely confounds his virgin birth. They both trace his lineage through Joseph, which they could only do if Joseph was his father.
- His own disciple, Philip, declared him to be the son of Joseph, and several texts show that it was the original belief.
- The story of the virgin birth rests on the slender foundations of an angel and a dream. Mary got it by an angel, and Joseph by a dream, and thereby we have the whole of the story of the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- However, we have neither Joseph's nor Mary's report of these things, but only Matthew and Luke's. We do not know that either of them ever saw or spoke with Joseph or Mary on the subject.
- If Christ were a miraculously born god, would his mother would have reproved him for misconduct when she found him in the temple, as she, if no one else, must have known his nature?
- If Mary conceived miraculously, why was it kept so long from Joseph? Did the concubine of god intend to deceive her lawful husband? An angel had to be sent from heaven to let him into the secret.
- Why did not god inform Joseph by *inspiration* instead of using the round about way of sending an angel to do it?
- **Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost**, but as we are told nothing more about the circumstances, does it not leave us suspicious?
- Since it all seems to have been based on dreams, was carried on through dreams, and has no better foundation than dreams, why should we give it better credit than similar stories found in heathen mythology? Or is it that Gentile Christianity is just a dreamy religion?
- In an educated and scientific age, should we accept reports of the birth of a god based on no better a foundation than dreams, angels and the legends of oriental mythology? In particular, can any scientist entertain the idea of infinite beings, themselves mere conjecture, actually impregnating human females?
- Ancient Eastern belief was that sexual intercourse was sinful, procreation was impure and human children were born thus contaminated. Human beings were imperfect and any god sent into the world as a saviour had to avoid such contamination. The solution was that incarnate gods entered the world through human virgins to avoid the impurity and the slander that the saviour might have arisen in more normal ways if the mother were not a virgin. Can any unbiased deny that this is the source of the origin of the story of Christ's virgin birth?
- If Christ had to come into the world avoiding the impurity of human conception and birth, why did he not



descend directly from heaven in person? If he can descend on the clouds at his—still awaited—second advent, why could he not do the same at his first advent, thereby pre-empting reasons for doubt and saving far more of fallen humanity?

- Could anyone, free of religious guilt and indoctrination, presented with these stories as the truth today, willingly and joyfully accept them as proof that someone was a god? Or would they consider them to be fraudulent inventions, intended to gull the credulous?
- If you have never taken the time as a Christian to study the origins of your faith I highly suggest it. If you would only familiarize yourself with the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. one can quickly see how under the influence of Constantine, a Sun-worshipper, that in the conversion of the Empire to the Christian faith then its leader, Jesus, had to be moulded into the image of prior Sun-gods. Such was Constantine's wish and whatever the emperor desired was done or else. Check it out!

**Answer for yourself:** Does this event as depicted in the New Testament now seem "Divine and unique" to you any longer?



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# THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...IS IT A SUN-MYTH RETOLD?

In antiquity, filled with legend, lore, and superstition, the report of a virtuous woman giving birth to a child with the usual form, and possessing the usual characteristics of a human being, but without a male partner in the conception, might in an age of miracles and ignorance of natural law, be believed with implicit credulity. But in an age of intelligence, when the keys of science have provided modern man the answers for such legends and myths. Modern investigations into religious histories of pagan nations have laid bare the fact that most ancient religious countries abound in reports of these "virgin births." That being the case then the only recourse for a Christian who is a "thinking believer" is to obtain a profound and general skepticism after he has done personal study into such legends.

We continue our search for the truth and origin of the "virgin birth" stories that not only were applied to Jesus in the New Testament, but which also can be traced to the beginning of time for other "g-d-men" and the various religions of the heathen nations. **What is truth? How do we know we have? How do we know we don't have it?** Well, the last question is easy: You study!

My research has again linked such "virgin birth" stories to the Sun. Nothing is new here as you shall quickly see. In this respect these immaculately conceived "virgin born" g-ds are **personified from the Sun.**

## THE EVIDENCE

Mankind will not emulate extraordinary leaders but instead fall to their knees, adore and worship them. Rather than follow a difficult example it is easier to deify the exemplar thus providing an excuse for not emulating him. It has been said: "How can mere men do what gods can do?" This inclination to worship Jesus as a god rather than follow him as a man stems from the earliest days of Christianity. Within 60 years of the crucifixion Jesus's adoring followers had created the myth of the conception of Jesus by the Holy Ghost making him at least half a god from the start. He thus became an impossible role model for merely mortal men. Yet even the half of him that was human passed on by his mother was too much for the adorers. They they wanted a fully fledged god. After centuries as a tolerated heresy, in 1854 the doctrine of "The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God" was adopted by the Roman Church rendering Jesus's mother a perfect being from her own birth, free of original sin, incapable of sin throughout her life - a sinless mate for God Almighty to conceive a divine son. Jesus as a fine example of loving manhood had been usurped by the adorers and worshippers.

But lets look at the text. No mention is made of the Virgin Birth in the epistles and in fact Paul could not be more explicit in recording that Jesus was "of the seed of David according to the flesh" as if he were refuting the suggestion. For Paul Jesus was the Son of God through the "Spirit of Holiness" which did not require a supernatural conception. Nor does the earliest gospel mention the virgin birth. The mystical Book of the Revelation of John the Divine does not mention it, though it would be perfect for inclusion in such an allegorical



piece. None of the Jewish patriarchs were born of virgins and, though older women beyond the menopause had their wombs "opened" to conceive Isaac, Jacob and Samuel, no divine impregnation was suggested.

The virgin birth appears in Luke and Matthew, years after the event, to prove Jesus's divinity. The birth stories in the two gospels come from different sources and differ widely but both contradict their central thesis that Jesus's mother was a virgin by giving a genealogy to show that Joseph was descended from David, an irrelevancy if Joseph had not impregnated his wife. The original idea was obviously to trace Jesus's lineage through Joseph to David to fulfill messianic prophecy. Then the idea of making Jesus more divine through a virgin birth arose and was tacked on spoiling the object of the genealogy. The editors of both gospels see a problem and try to avoid it: in Luke by inserting "as people thought" to show Jesus was not really Joseph's son and in Matthew by slyly separating Joseph from his son by inserting after "...Joseph" "the husband of Mary, of whom was begotten" Jesus. If the intention was to imply that Mary was begetting Jesus then the person inserting the story was either ignorant or depended on the ignorance of his readers for only men could beget according to Jewish convention. Neither Luke nor Matthew refer to the birth story again and indeed it contradicts the main story. Presumably his family or at least his mother would have been aware of all that feting by kings and shepherds, and glory in the heavens, and the reason for it all. Yet later they are continually puzzled and disappointed by Jesus's behaviour. And why bother trying to establish a divine conception when both refer to Joseph in the main narrative as the father of Jesus.

**The Ebionites, the first Jewish followers of Jesus accepted Joseph as the natural father.** An attempt was made by the early Christians to justify the virgin birth story by referring to Isaiah 7:14 where is written, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son". The word employed in the Greek version of the Old Testament was parthenos. But a reference to the original Hebrew yields the word almah. Both parthenos and almah did not necessarily mean a virgin as we understand it, a woman who had never had intercourse. In Greek it could mean youth, the state of unmarried, or even a person who is first married. In Hebrew it could mean beside the usual meaning, an immature girl who could not conceive because she had not yet started to menstruate. The idea of a virgin as a premenstrual girl allows her to have children and still be a virgin. If she were to conceive from her very first ovulation, she would not have menstruated but would be a mother and still a virgin. If she conceived at the first ovulation after the birth, she could be a virgin mother of two children of different ages. Since Jewish girls often married before menstruation - in Joel 1:8 an almah's husband is mentioned - virgin mothers were not unusual. Now Mary was described as "betrothed" to Joseph implying that she was a minor under the age of twelve and a half. After that age she could become his wife. Thus the "virgin" Mary could have given birth. If she did, the truth was misunderstood in the gentile world of the Roman Empire, and indeed beyond, where it was de rigeur not only for gods but also great men to be born of virgins. **Ra, Hatshepsut, Amenophis III, Cyrus the Great, Julius Caesar, Perseus, Plato, Apollonius of Tyana, Fohi, Lao Kium, Zoroaster and Attis all came of virgin births according to their followers.**

Herodotus explained that such conceptions occurred by way of a ray of light and according to Plutarch's book on Isis and Osiris it entered through the ear. Tertullian confirms it was a ray of light. Thus medieval pictures of Mary at the moment of conception show a ray of light entering her ear. **Furthermore it is common for gods and those akin to gods to have mothers called Mary or a cognate name. Adonis was born of Myrrha, Hermes of Maia, Cyrus of Mariana or Mandane, Joshua of Miriam, Buddha of Maya and Khrishna of Maritala.**

Many are the cases noted in history of young maidens claiming a paternity for their male offspring by a G-d.

Mr. Kenrick tells us the likeness of this virgin mother, with the divine child in her arms, may now be seen represented in sculpture on some of the ancient, ruined temples of that ruined empire. And Mr. Higgins (Anacalypsis) makes the broad declaration that **"the worship of this virgin mother, with her G-d-begotten child, prevailed everywhere."** This author also quotes Mr. Riquord as saying, this son of G-d "was exhibited in effigy, lying in a manger, in the same manner the infant Jesus was afterward laid in the cave at Bethlehem." Mr. Higgins further testifies that **the worship of this virgin G-d-mother (that is, the G-d and the mother) is of very ancient date and universal prevalence in all the eastern countries, as is proved by sculptured figures bearing the marks of great age.** By the way, the reprint of Anacalypsis is available on the Internet...I recommend it very highly if you want to get to the truth



about many of the doctrines of Christendom.

Mr. Higgins remarks that the mother was still held to be a virgin, even after she had given birth to other children besides the deity-begotten bantling, which furnishes another striking [parallel to the history of Mary, the mother of Jesus](#), as she was still called a virgin after she had given birth to Jesus and his brothers James and John. And it is an incident worth noticing here, that, in the case of Mayence, virgin-mother of the G-d-sired Hesus of the Druids, the ancient traditions of the country, more than two thousand years old, represent her body as being enveloped in light, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head, corresponding exactly to the apocalyptic figure described by St. John, in the twelfth chapter of his Revelation. She is also represented with her foot on the head of a serpent, according to Davie's [Universal Etymology](#).

In corroboration of this statement one only needs to examine the evidence existing today of such legends; such evidence from the religious records of India, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, Mexico, Tibet, etc.

Maia, mother of Sakia and Yasoda of Chrishna; Celestine, mother of the crucified Zunis; Chimalman, mother of Quexalcote; Semele, mother of the Egyptian Bacchus, and Minerva, mother of the Grecian Bacchus; Prudence, mother of Hercules; Alcmene, mother of Alcides; Shing- Mon, mother of Yu, and Mayence, mother of Hesus, were all as confidently believed to be pure, holy and chaste virgins, while giving birth to these G-ds, sons of G-d, Saviors and sin-atoners Mediators, as was Mary, mother of Jesus, and long before her time.

Ceres, the virgin mother of Osiris, claimed that he was begotten by the "father of all G-ds."

In Greece it became so common that the reigning king issued an edict, decreeing the death of all young women who should offer such an insult to deity as to lay to him the charge of begetting their children. The virgin Alcmene furnishes a case of a young woman claiming G-d as the father of her offspring, when she brought forth the divine Redeemer Alcides, 1280 years B.C.

Auguste Nichols tells us, in his [Philosophical Essays on Christianity](#), that Io is called, in Eschylus, "the Chaste Virgin," and her son "the Son of G-d" If you would like to see other example you need look no further than Guigne's [History of the Huns](#).

Gonzales informs us he found on an ancient temple in India the Latin inscription 'Partura, virginis,' "the virgin about to bring forth." And similar inscriptions have been found on pagan temples in the country of the ancient Gauls (Riquord's [Theology of the Ancient Gauls](#), Chapter X.).

"He who hath ears to hear, let him hear," and treasure up these facts. According to Chinese history there were two beings -- Tien and Chang-Ti -- worshiped in that country as G-ds more than twenty-five hundred years ago, born of virgins "who knew no man." The mother of the mighty and the almighty G-d Hercules, we are told, "knew only Jove."

*If history and tradition, then, are to be credited, G-d had many "well-beloved sons," born of pious and holy virgins, besides Jesus Christ. And some of them are represented as being his only begotten," and others his "first begotten," sons. And all these cases appear to be equally as well authenticated as the story of Jesus Christ. All stand upon a level, the same kind and the same amount of evidence being offered in each case.*

## THE BLACK VIRGIN

Curiously, several of the above-named Saviors are represented as being black, Jesus Christ included with this number. There is as much evidence that the Christian Savior was a black man, or at least a dark man, as there is of his being the son of the Virgin Mary, or that he once lived and moved upon the earth. And that evidence is the testimony of his disciples, who had nearly as good an opportunity of knowing what his



complexion was as the evangelists, who omit to say anything about it. In the pictures and portraits of Christ by the early Christians, he is uniformly represented as being black. And to make this the more certain, the red tinge is given to the lips; and the only text in the Christian bible quoted by orthodox Christians, as describing his complexion, represents it as being black. Solomon's declaration, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" (Sol. i. 5), is often cited as referring to Christ. According to the bible itself, then, Jesus Christ was a black man.

But a little background into the "black virgin." Hundreds of icons of Mary have intentionally black faces and hands. In France they are called "Vierge Noires" or Black Virgins; in other countries they are called Black Madonnas. Some call her "the other Mary"; **Jung said she is Isis**; others consider her to be the iconic remains of prehistoric Earth Mother worship. **She is linked with Cybele, Diana, Isis & Venus; cross-culturally she is associated with Kali, Inanna & Lilith.** Historically she has ties to the Crusades and the Moorish occupation of Spain, to the Conquistadors, who brought her to the New World, and to the Merovingians and Knights Templars, who saw her as Mary Magdalene. As Sara-la-Kali she is revered by the Gypsies at Saintes Maries de la Mer. For modern psychologists she is said to express the archetype of the Dark Feminine. Whoever the enigmatic Black Virgin may be, she holds a powerful attraction for her millions of devotees around the world. Her sacred sites stand on highly charged earth energy centers, enhanced by megalithic ley-lines and sacred architecture. From ancient times to present, people have undertaken pilgrimages to her shrines as a way to explore her mysteries and to enable her to do her miraculous work of healing, transformation and inspiration. France has more than 300 Black Virgin sites, with over 150 Black Virgins still in existence.

**Answer for yourself:** It is believed by many that Jesus will return to this planet as Messiah. Let us suppose that, at some future time, he makes his second advent to the earth, as some Christians anticipate he will do, and that he comes in the character of a "black" Messiah, how would he be received negro-hating Christians or the sons of the Aryan nations?

**Answer for yourself:** Would they worship a negro G-d?

## THE LINK TO ASTROLOGY

And the tradition of divine Saviors being born of undefiled and undeflowered virgins has an astronomical chapter we must not omit to notice. The virgin, with her G-d-begotten child, was pictured imaginarily in the heavens from time immemorial. They are represented on the Hindu zodiac, at least three thousand years old, and on the ancient Egyptian planispheres. And if you will examine Burritt's Geography of the Heavens, you will find the **infant G-d-son (the sun) is represented as being born into a new year on the 25th of December (the very date assigned for Christ's birth), and may be seen rising over the eastern horizon, out of Mary, Maria, or Mare (the Latin for sea), with the infant G-d in her arms,** being heralded and preceded by a bright star, which rises immediately preceding the virgin and her child, thus suggesting the text, "We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him." (Matt. 2:8).

If you have not you need to refresh yourself with the 280 cycle from the vernal equinox to Dec. 25 which the ancients believed was the gestation of the Sun-g-d impregnation of "mother earth." The ancients believed this "child g-d" was to be born of a Virgin. This, of course represents the constellation of Virgo. Virgo had command of the Fall equinox at the time this passage was edited by the Gentile priesthood. And Virgo, as such, represented the fall of the fetus in the third trimester, before it's birth. A human fetus enters its third trimester after 186-187 days. The Fall equinox, Sept. 22 (when the fetus falls toward the vagina, birth) is 186 days from the Conception at the vernal equinox (March. 21). Again, we see the link between the human body and the Cosmos and the ancients interpreted this as man being made in the image of the Cosmos which declared to them G-d.



**Answer for yourself:** Is this a coincidence and is the writers of the New Testament relating "truth" when they write of the birth of Jesus? Where is the Holy Spirit in any of this?

Such facts led the learned Alphonso to exclaim:

## **"The adventures of Jesus Christ are all depicted among the stars"**

And such facts fasten the conviction on our mind that the stories of G-ds cohabiting with young maids or virgins, and begetting other G-ds, is of astrological origin -- the story of Jesus Christ included. A critical research shows that astronomy and religion were interblended, interwoven, and confounded together at a very early period of time, so indissolubly, that it now becomes impossible to separate them (at least without a considerable amount of study and finances to procure the necessary documents for inspection).

## **INDIAN AND EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY**

This Virgin, of whom the Sun, the true "Savior of Mankind," is born, is neither the bright and beautiful Dawn, or the dark Earth, or Night. Hence we have, as we have already seen if your have read the prior articles, the **"Virgin,"** or **"Virgo,"** as one of the signs of the Zodiac. The sign of the "Celestial Virgin" rises above the horizon at the moment in which we fix the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (Higgins, Anacalypsis, vol. i. p. 314, and Bonwick, Egyptian Belief, p. 147). We have in the first decade the **Sign of the Virgin**, following the most ancient tradition of the Persians, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, Hermes and Aesculapius, a young woman called in the Persian language, "Selinidos de Darzama; in the Arabic, Aderenedesa-that is to say, a chaste, pure, immaculate virgin, suckling an infant, which some nations call Jesus (Savior), but which we in Greek call "Christ" (Abulmazer). As a Christian you need to understand that this is the origin of the Mary and Jesus statues you see in many Catholic Churches. From this would come a whole host of "false doctrines" believed by millions today.

The **"Dawn"** was **personified** by the ancients as a **"virgin mother, who bore the Sun"** (Fiske, Myths and Mythmakers, p. 156). In Sanskrit "Ida" is the **"Earth,"** the wife of Dyaus (the Sky), and so we have before us the mythical phrase, **"the Sun at its birth rest on the earth."** In other words, **"the Sun at birth is nursed in the lap of the mother."** The moment we understand the "nature" of a myth, all impossibilities, contradictions, and immoralities disappear. If a mythical personage be nothing more than a name of the Sun, his birth may be derived from ever so many different mothers. He may be the son of the Sky or the Dawn or of the Sea or of the Night (Renouf's Hibbert Lectures, p. 108).

This Celestial Virgin was feigned to be a mother. This Celestial Virgin is represented in the Indian Zodiac of Sr. William Jones, with ears of corn in one hand, and the lotus in the other. In Kircher's Zodiac of Hermes, she has corn in both hands. In other planispheres of the Egyptian priests she carries ears of corn in one hand, and the infant Savior Horus in the other. In Roman Catholic countries, she is generally represented with the child in one hand, and the lotus or lily in the other. In Vol. II. of Montfaucon's work, she is represented as a female nursing a child, with ears of corn in her hand, and the legend IAO. She is seated on clouds, a star is at her head. The reading of the Greek letters, from right to left, show this to be very ancient.



In the Vedic hymns Aditi, the **"Dawn,"** is called the **"Mother of the G-ds."** She is said to have given birth to the Sun (Max Muller, Origin of Religions, p. 261). "As the Sun and all the solar deities rise from the east," says Prof. M. Muller, "we can understand how **Aditi (Dawn)** came to be called the **"Mother of the Bright G-ds"** (Ibid. p. 230). The poets of the Veda indulged in theogonic speculations and they knew of Indra as the greatest of g-ds, they knew of Agni as the g-d of g-ds, they knew of Varuna as the ruler of all; but they were by no means startled at the idea that their Indra had a mother, or that Varuna was nursed in the lap of Aditi. All this was true to nature; for their g-d was the Sun, and the mother who born and nursed him was the Dawn. Without scarcely an exception, all the names by which the "Virgin g-ddess" of the Akropolis was known point to this



mythology of the Dawn (Cox, Aryan Myths, vol. i. p 228).

We find in the Vishnu Purana, that Devaki (the virgin mother of the Hindu Savior Chrishna, whose history corresponds in most every particular with that of Christ Jesus who would come over 800 years later) is called Aditi, which, in the Rig-Veda, is the name for the Dawn. Thus we see the legend is complete. Devaki is Aditi, Aditi is the Dawn, and the Dawn is the Virgin Mother. "The Savior of mankind," who is born of her is the Sun, the Sun is Chrishna, and Chrishna is Christ.

In the Mahabharata, Chrishna is also represented as the "Son of Aditi" (Cox, Aryan Myths, vol. iii, pp. 105, and 130, vol. ii). In other words, Chrishna is the son of the "Virgin Mother" as is the Christ.

Indra, the Sun, who was worshipped in some parts of India as the Crucified G-d, is also represented in the Vedic hymns as the Son of the Dawn. He is said to have been born of Dahana, who is Daphne, a personification of the Dawn (Fiske, Myths and Mythmakers, p. 118).

The humanity of this SOLAR GOD-MAN, this demiurge, is strongly insisted on in the Rig-Vida. He is the son of G-d, but also the son of Aditi. He is Purusha, the man, the male. Agni is frequently called the "Son of man." It is expressly explained that the titles Agni, Indra, Mitra, etc., all refer to one Sun-g-d under "many names." And when we find the name of a mortal, Yama, who once lived upon earth, included among these names, the humanity of the demiurge becomes still more accentuated, and we get at the root idea.

Horus, the Egyptian Savior, was the son of the virgin Isis. Now, this Isis, in Egyptian mythology, is the same as the virgin Devaki in Hindu mythology. She is the Dawn (Renouf, Hibbert Lectures, p. 111 and 161). Isis, as we have already seen, is represented suckling the infant Horus, and, in the words of Prof. Renouf, we may say, "in whose lap can the Sun be nursed more fitly than in that of the Dawn" (Ibid., p. 161, 179).

Among the g-ddesses of Egypt, the highest was Neith, who reigned inseparable with Amun in the upper sphere. She was called "Mother of the g-ds," "Mother of the sun." She was the feminine origin of all things, as Amun was the male origin. She held the same rank at Sais as Amun did at Thebes. Her temples there are said to have exceeded in colossal grandeur anything every seen before. On one of these was the celebrated inscription thus deciphered by Champollion:

I am all that has been, all that is, all that will be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals me. My offspring is the Sun

She was mother of the Sun-g-d Ra, and is commonly supposed to represent Heaven; but some expressions which are hardly applicable to heaven, render it more probable that she is one of the many names of the (Ibid., p. 179).

## GREEK MYTHOLOGY

If we turn from Indian and Egyptian, to Grecian mythology, we shall also find that their Sun-g-ds and solar heroes are born of the same virgin mother. Theseus was said to have been born of Aithra, "the pure air," and Cedipus of Iokaste, "the violet light of morning." Perseus was born of the virgin Danae, and was called the "Son of the bright morning" (Tales of Ancient Greece, pp. xxxi). In Io, the mother of the "sacred bull, the mother also of Hercules, we see the violet-tinted morning from which the sun is born; all these g-ds and heroes being, like Christ Jesus, personifications of the Sun (Cox, Aryan Myths, vol. i. p. 229). The bull symbolized the productive force in nature, and hence it was associated with the Sun-g-ds. This animal was venerated by nearly all the peoples of antiquity (Wake, Phallism in Anct. Religs. p. 45).

"The Savior of Mankind" was also represented as being born of the "dusky mother," which accounts for many Pagan, and so-called Christian, g-ddesses being represented black. This is the "dark night," who for many weary hours travails with the birth of her child. The Sun, which scatters the darkness, is also the child of the



darkness, and so the phrase naturally went **"that he was born of her."** Of the two legends related in the poems afterwards combined in the "Hymn to Apollo," the former relates the birth of Apollo, the **Sun**, from Leto, the **Darkness**, which is called his mother. The idea was entertained by the ancients that these g-d-begotten heroes were engendered without any carnal intercourse, and that they were they sons of Jupiter. This idea is later expanded and relates that such "virgin births" comes from the idea that the **Holy Spirit was operating in some fashion on the virgin mother Earth** (Knight, Ancient Art and Mythology, p. 156).

The dark earth was also represented as being the mother of the g-d Sun, who apparently came out of, or was born of her, in the East, as Minos (**the sun**) was represented to have been born of Ida (**the earth**) (Cox, Aryan Myths, p. 87).

In Hindu mythology, the **Earth**, under the name of Prithivi, receives a certain share of honors as one of the primitive g-ddesses of the Veda, being thought of as the **"kind mother."** Moreover, various **deities** were regarded as the progeny resulting from the fancied union of the Earth with Dyaus (**Heaven**).

Our Aryan forefathers looked up to the **heavens** and they gave it the name of Dyaus, from a root word which means **"to shine."** And when, out of the forces and forms of nature, they afterwards fashioned other g-ds, this name Dyaus became **Dyaus pitar, the Heaven-father**, or Lord of All; and in far later times, when the wester Aryans had found their home in Europe, the Dyaus pitar of the central Asian land became the **Zeupater** of the Greeks, and the **Jupiter** of the Romans, and the first part of his name gave us the word **Deity**.

According to Egyptian mythology, Isis was also the Earth (Williams, Hinduism, p. 24). Again, from the union of Seb and Nut sprung the mild Osiris, Seb in the **Earth**, Nut in **Heaven**, and Osiris is the **Sun** (Renouf's Hibbert Lectures, p.110-111).

Tacitus, the Roman historian, speaking of the Germans in A.D. 98, says:

**There is nothing in these several tribes that merits attention, except that they all agree in worshipping the g-ddess Earth, or as they call her, Herth, whom they consider as the common mother of all (Manners of the Germans, p. xi).**

These virgin mothers and virgin g-ddesses of antiquity, were also, at times, **personifications of the Moon**, or of Nature (Knight, Ancient Art and Mythology, pp. 81, 90, and 166). **The moon was called by the ancients, "The Queen," "The Highest Princess," "The Queen of Heaven," "The Princess and Queen of Heaven," etc.** She was **Ishtar, Ashera, Diana, Artemis, Isis, Juno, Lucina, Astarte, etc.** (Goldzhier, pp. 158; Knight, pp. 99-100).

**Answer for yourself:** Who is "G-d the Father," who overshadows the maiden?

The overshadowing of the maiden by **"G-d the Father,"** whether he be called **Zeus, Jupiter, or Jehovah**, is simply the **Heaven, the Sky, the "All-Father,"** looking down upon with love, and overshadowing the maiden, the broad flushing light of Dawn, or the Earth. **From this union the Sun is born without any carnal intercourse. (virgin birth).** The mother is not yet a virgin. This is illustrated in Hindu mythology by the union of Prithivi, "Mother Earth," with Dyaus, **"Heaven."** Various deities were regarded as their progeny. **The "G-d the Father" of all nations of antiquity was nothing more than a personification of the Sky or the Heavens.** In one of the Chinese sacred books, the Shu-king, Heaven and Earth are called "Father and Mother of all things" (Taylor, Primitive Culture, pp. 294-296). The **"G-d the Father"** of the Indians is Dyaus, that is, the **Sky** (Williams, Hinduism, p. 24). Ormuzd, the g-d of the ancient Persians, was a personification of the sky. In Greek iconography Zeus is the Heaven. **The Christian G-d supreme is still Dyaus Pitar, the "Heavenly Father."**

**NOW PAY ATTENTION: THE SUN BECOME THE SON!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

In the Vedic hymns the **Sun**, the Lord and Savior, the Redeemer and Preserver of mankind, is frequently called the **"Son of the Sky"** (Muller, Origin of Religions, pp. 261, 290).



**Answer for yourself:** Did you notice that the Sun is now become the "Son"? Get ready for incarnational theology for here it comes.

According to Egyptian mythology, Seb (**the Earth**) is overshadowed by Nut (**Heaven**), the result of this union being the beneficent Lord and Savior, Osiris (Renouf, Hebbert Lectures, pp. 110-111). The same thing is to be found in ancient Grecian mythology. Zeus or Jupiter is the **Sky**, and Danae, Leto, Iokaste, Io and others, are the **Dawn**, or the **violet light of morning** (Cox, Tales of Ancient Greece, pp. xxxi, and 82; and Aryan Mythology, vol. i. p. 229).

*The sky appeared to men to perform the functions of a Father, as the Earth those of a Mother. The sky was the father, for it cast seed into the bosom of the earth (rain), which in receiving them became fruitful, and brought forth, and was the mother...Plutarch*

The Phoenician theogony is founded on the same principles. Heaven and Earth (called Ouranos and Ghe) are at the head of a genealogy of aeons, whose adventures are conceived in the mythological style of these physical allegorists (Squire, Serpent Symbol, p. 66).

In the Samothracian mysteries, which seem to have been the most anciently established ceremonies of the kind in Europe, the Heaven and the Earth were worshipped as a male and female **divinity**, and as the **parents of all things** (Squire, Serpent Symbol, p. 64).

The Supreme G-d (the Al-fader), of the ancient Scandinavians was Odin, a personification of the Heavens. The principal g-ddess among them was Frigga, a personification of the Earth. It was the opinion among these people that this Supreme Being or Celestial G-d had united with the Earth (Frigga) to produce "Baldur the Good" (the Sun), who corresponds to the Apollo of the Greeks and Romans, and the Osiris of the Egyptians (Mallet, Northern Antiquitiess, pp. 90, 94, 98. 406, 510, 511).

Xiuletl, in the Mexican language, signifies Blue, and hence was a name which the Mexicans gave to Heaven, from which Xiuleti-cutli is derived, an epithet signifying "the G-d of Heaven," which they bestowed upon Tezcatlipoca, who was the "Lord of All," the "Supreme G-d." He it was who overshadowed the Virgin of Tule, Chimelman, who began the Savior Quetzalcoatl (the Sun).

Now I could go on but you get the point. As you have seen, the overshadowing of the Earth by the Sky produced the Sun. It would be a short step from personification to glorification to deification. And as you also saw, as far back as the Vedic hymns the **Sun**, the Lord and Savior, the Redeemer and Preserver of mankind, is frequently called the **"Son of the Sky"** (Muller, Origin of Religions, pp. 261, 290). **It is this concept later accepted by Nicea that made Jesus "of the same essence as the Father;" therefore the Son is equal with the Father. This is how idolatry and Sun Worship crept into the faith of the early church and remains there today!**

**But back to the point, the whole concept of the immaculate virgin births of pagan g-dmen is found in the overshadowing of the Earth by the Sun thus producing the offspring of the Sun and Earth; namely the Son.**

**Answer for yourself:** Now don't you think that these beliefs among the Gentiles of the world played a large part in the fashioning of many doctrines "about Jesus?" Could it be possible such doctrines were "read into the life of Jesus" by non-Jews who had ingrained anit-Semitism? Is it possible that they made "Jesus equal with G-d" and recorded such "beliefs" in documents that you have come to believe today are "inerrant" and "infallible" (New Testament)?

**Answer for yourself:** Is the evidence not overwhelming? Where is a Jewish Rabbi to be found in any of this whose purpose was to bring men to G-d by preaching repentance and obedience to the Commandments of G-d?

the virgin birth of jesus christ as recorded in the new testament is a sun myth retold

**Answer for yourself:** As a Christian, could you have inherited and believed lies instead of the truths about the "historical Jesus" which fly in the face of such pagan traditions?